

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**Monday, November 16, 2020****6:30 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 the purpose of conducting a Public Hearing and the regularly scheduled meeting, it being the third Monday.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

P. Edwin Russ, **Chairman**
 Jerome McMillian, **Vice Chairman**
 James E. Prevatte
 Giles E. Byrd
 Trent Burroughs
 Ricky Bullard
 Charles T. McDowell

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Mike Stephens, **County Manager**
 Amanda B. Prince, **County Attorney**
 June B. Hall, **Clerk to Board**

APPOINTEE ABSENT:

Bobbie Faircloth, **Finance Officer**

6:30 P.M.

PUBLIC HEARING - Community Transportation Plan (CTP Grant) FY 21-22: the purpose of the Public Hearing is to inform the public on the proposed Columbus County Community Transportation Program application to be submitted to the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

PUBLIC HEARING OPENED:

At 6:30 P.M., Chairman P. Edwin Russ opened the Public Hearing, and stated this Public Hearing is for the Community Transportation Plan (CTP Grant) FY 21-22, and the purpose of the Public Hearing is to inform the public on the proposed Columbus County Community Transportation Program application to be submitted to the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

COMMENTS:

No comments were received either orally or written.

PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED:

At 6:31 P.m., Commissioner Byrd made a motion to close the Public Hearing, seconded by Vice Chairman McMillian. The motion unanimously passed.

6:31 P.M.**REGULAR SESSION:**

Agenda Items #1, #2 and #3: MEETING CALLED to ORDER, INVOCATION and PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE:

At 6:31 P.M., Chairman P. Edwin Russ called the November 16, 2020 Columbus County Board of Commissioners Regular Session Meeting to order. The invocation was delivered by Vice Chairman Jerome McMillian. Everyone in attendance stood and pledged Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America which was led by Commissioner James E. Prevatte.

COMMISSIONER ELECTS to ATTEND MEETING:

Commissioner Bullard made a motion for two (2) of the three (3) Commissioner Elects to attend the November 16, 2020 Board Meeting, seconded by Vice Chairman Jerome McMillian. A roll-call vote was taken with the following results:

AYES: Chairman Russ, Vice Chairman McMillian, Commissioners Bullard, McDowell, Byrd and Burroughs; **and**
NAY: Commissioner Prevatte.

The motion passes on a six (6) to one (1) vote.

AGENDA ADD-ON:

Chairman Russ stated that an Agenda Add-on was needed, and that was a Closed Session in Accordance with N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (6) Personnel, and that would be Agenda Item #27E.

Commissioner Burroughs made a motion to add Closed Session in Accordance with N.C.G.S. §

143-318.11(a) (6) Personnel as Agenda Item #27E, seconded by Commissioner Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

ADJUSTMENT to AGENDA:

Chairman Russ stated that an adjustment would be made to the Agenda, and that adjustment would be to move Agenda Items #4 and #5 to Agenda Item #26-C.

Agenda Item #6: BOARD MINUTES APPROVAL:

Commissioner McDowell made a motion to approve the November 02, 2020 Columbus County Board of Commissioners Regular Session Meeting Minutes, as recorded, seconded by Commissioner Prevatte. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #7: EMERGENCY SERVICES - DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE:

Kay Worley, Emergency Services Director, delivered the following Departmental Update.

*Statistical information obtained from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020

Emergency Management

- Dispatched and/or responded to 54 calls.
- Serving as the Incident Commander for COVID.
- Currently still working on Hurricane Recovery from Matthew and Florence. Working with County Administration on the CDBG-DR grant money.
- Serving on the County Long Term Planning Recovery Committee and Columbus County Disaster Response. These committees are compiled of our VOADs working in the county to assist the residents with unmet needs.
- Received \$38,904.03 for completion of Emergency Management Performance Grant.
- Working with the Local Emergency Planning Committee on continuing development of county Rope Rescue and Water Rescue Teams.
- Upgraded the County Rehab trailer to make it more incident ready in the event it is needed for Fire/EMS/LEO.
- Replaced 40kw generator for the admin offices, due to age and problems with older generator. Replaced carpet and added security feature at main door.
- Assisted Board of Elections with tents, water, ice and message boards to slow down traffic at the Board of Elections.

911

- Dispatches for all fire, EMS, Police Departments and Sheriff's Office. Also dispatch for Forestry Service, SCC Campus Security, Department of Transportation, Animal Control, Utility Companies, Department of Social Services, Emergency Management, Fire Marshal and Juvenile Justice.
- Breakdown of calls received from July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020:
Phone Calls

• 911 Calls Received -	47,006
• 10 digit Emergency -	5,771
• Administrative Calls -	76,532
TOTAL	129,309

 - Calls entered into Computer Aided Dispatch 63,454
Source: ECATS(statewide call tracking system)
 - Total EMS calls – 18,472; increase of 3,956 calls from last year.
 - Total Fire calls – 9,185; increase of 3,933 calls from last year.
 - Total Law Enforcement calls – 53,528; decrease of 884 calls from last year.
 - These totals do not reflect the amount of calls entered into CAD, they reflect the number of calls that each discipline was dispatched to respond.
- According to Session Law (SL 2019-00) PSAP's will implement plans to migrate to the State ESInet on or before July 1, 2021. The ESInet is the Statewide Telephone Network that will connect all PSAP's if needed and calls can be transferred and answered at any location in the state. Expected Go Live Date February 10, 2021.
- Continuously receiving software upgrades for Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD).
- Continuously receiving mapping system upgrades.
- Due to COVID each case that is positive we are now responsible for flagging that address to make first responders aware that they are wearing their appropriate personal protective equipment. When the individual has recovered we in turn un-flag the address.
- Currently have 3 vacant positions.

Addressing

- New addresses issued are 330. Changes to existing roads are 1,824. 9 new roads have been added in the county.
- Purchased equipment so we can make road signs in the Addressing office, which reduced the cost

- of ordering signs.
- Responsible for replacing road signs if they are damaged or stolen (which is a problem) . Also responsible for maintaining road signs.
- Working on a project in which we will have a picture of every house and/or business that is addressed in the county. These pictures are given to our county GIS department which reviews and places these up to date pictures in the 911 database. 104 roads have been completed.
- Filled vacant sign technician position.

Fire Marshal's Office

- Responded to 110 calls (61 structure fires, 9 illegal burns, 5 vehicle fires, 6 woods fires, 6 accidents, 1 Search and Rescue, 24 public service miscellaneous (gas leak, hazardous condition).
- Conducted 54 fire investigations
- Conducted 365 fire inspections including schools, businesses, day cares, foster homes and group homes, generated \$14,415.
- Issued 15 permits generating \$4,123.
- Issued 5 civil citations for \$500.
- Filled vacant Deputy Fire Marshal and vacant part-time Fire Inspector positions.
- Plan Reviews for new constructions total 8.
- Installed smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors in homes throughout the county that were in need.
- Worked with departments to prepare for NCDOT rating inspections to help lower ratings.
- Working with engineers, architects, contractors on several new construction projects and upgrades throughout the county.
- Assisted Emergency Management with the gown project due to Covid as well as assisting with resource request.

Communications

- Currently working with NC Hwy Patrol and Motorola on installing and converting to the Highway Patrol Viper system as well as installation of a new county wide paging system.
- Project Kickoff Meeting was held March 11, 2020 with Communications Committee and Motorola. This date was chosen by Motorola.
- Based on time line of project given to us at the kickoff meeting final system acceptance will occur on May 17, 2021. Due to COVID this date may be pushed out an additional couple of months.
- Talk groups for fire/ems/leo have been given to Motorola. Motorola submitted the Talk groups to Hwy Patrol, there were a few changes made but they were not major. These have been approved.
- Templates are almost complete, we cannot complete until we receive approval from our mutual aid counties, one neighboring county is revising their template and it should be complete in another week or so. Received Highway Patrol's new template on November 5 their templates will be included in the county template.

Also, with Horry County there is a process before we can add their templates to ours. Keep in mind that these surrounding counties have to give us approval for using their Talk groups/templates and they have to give us their talk group/template information first. In return we will be providing them approvals and our Talk groups.

- Each tower in the county is required to have a structural analysis before any equipment can be added to a tower site. Based on the information we have received there are 3 tower sites in the county that have not passed. We are working with Motorola on possible solutions, keep in mind, these sites not passing may hold the project up as well. The tower sites that did not pass are Lake Waccamaw, 911 center and Fair Bluff.
- The tower at the 911 center did not pass the structural analysis, the analysis showed inadequacies with the foundation as well as the tower. This tower will need to be further investigated. The tower may need to be remediated or even taken down.
- Emergency Responder radios are being programmed and reprogrammed by our department on a day to day basis.
- Our office is responsible for maintaining all Viper Id#'s, serials numbers, assignments, and authorization with NC Hwy Patrol.

Keep in mind there are other entities involved in this project that control certain aspects, which in turn takes it out of our hands.

COVID Response

- Anticipating a shortage of Personal Protective Equipment, specifically gowns, we came up with our "Gown Project", the county purchased fabric from a local vendor, pattern for gowns obtained, a local prison cut out the pattern and we requested volunteers from local seamstresses to assist in sewing the material. Once sewn they were delivered to our local hospital to be cleaned, disinfected, sanitized. When completed we distributed to our emergency responders. We have provided 2,700 cloth gowns to our emergency responders and hospital. These are reusable.
- Not knowing how many deaths we would have in our county and our morgue holds only 2 bodies we made a temporarily morgue in the event we needed it.
- We also have a quarantine facility set up in the county in the event someone needs a place to

- quarantine.
- Made preparations for shelter operations during a pandemic. Setting up assessment areas in which temp is taken and medical questions asked before entering a shelter. Identified isolation areas in shelters for people that were not able to pass the medical assessment, areas where people may be running a fever, or have been exposed to someone with Covid, providing a place for them so no one is turned away.
- Worked daily with our local hospital, nursing homes, funeral homes and first responders to ensure they had all the necessary staffing and personal protective equipment to perform their jobs. Any shortages we were able to fill locally or through the state. No agency that I am aware of ever ran completely out of PPE which is something to be proud of, we worked very hard to make sure this did not happen. Because there were extreme shortages of PPE throughout the state.
- Our office received and filled over 270 resource requests from agencies throughout the county.
- Assisted in filling staffing requests from our local nursing home. Due to them being directly affected by COVID we assisted in helping find staffing during their time of need.
- We now have a very small storage area with supplies on hand of surgical masks, N95 masks, gowns, gloves any and all PPE equipment that may be needed for the county. In the event we become short we immediately reach out to the state.
- All agencies know that in the event they have a shortage of supplies to reach out to our department.
- Several new protocols were put into place by our EMS Medical Physician for emergency response. These protective measures were put in place to protect our first responders. To my knowledge because of this no first responder has tested positive for Covid due to working in an emergency services function. Daily our first responders are providing medical care to COVID patients and transporting to the hospital.
- Daily we have conference calls with State officials, County leadership, our local hospital and first responders since the pandemic.
- The State EOC has been opened for over 240 days.
- Ordered, received and distributed 50,000 cloth masks.
- Entered 193 WebEOC request to NCEM for needed supplies throughout the county. As well as monitored ReadyOps new program to assist Churches, dental offices and funeral homes with state request for supplies. Once these requests were filled by the State our office received the items and was responsible for distribution.
- Daily conference calls were held with our local and state partnering agencies. Conference calls are still being conducted.
- Ordered 169 pallets of free hand sanitizer for the county.

Regular Attended Meetings, Conferences and Con-Ed

- Monthly Fire & Rescue Association Meetings
- Quarterly EMS Peer Review Committee Meetings
- Quarterly Fire Peer Review Committee Meetings
- Quarterly LEPC Meetings
- Quarterly Emergency Food & Shelter Board Meetings
- Communications Meetings
- Emergency Management Forums
- Quarterly SERAC Meetings
- EM Conferences Biannually
- 911 State Board Meetings
- County Safety Committee Meetings
- Eastern Carolina Fire & Rescue Association meetings
- Fire Investigators Conference
- Con-Ed classes for Fire Inspections/Fire Investigations
- Con-Ed classes for Emergency Management
- Long Term Disaster Recovery Meetings

**Some meetings were cancelled due to Covid, some have transitioned into conference calls.

DISCUSSION:

In-depth discussion was conducted relative to the following:

1. Potential extra costs of adding additional equipment to the existing towers, and the possibility of having to construct other towers;
2. DRAFT Memorandum of Understanding with Horry County and State Highway Patrol to use radio equipment; **and**
3. Authorizing Kay Worley, Emergency Services Director, to sign the documents when they are finalized.

MOTION:

Commissioner McDowell made a motion to authorize Kay Worley to sign documents on the radio system when they are finalized, seconded by Commissioner Bullard. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #8: COOPERATIVE EXTENSION - DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE:

Dalton Dockery, Cooperative Extension Director, delivered the following Departmental Update. **(This was originally scheduled for October 19, 2020 Meeting which was cancelled.)**

We continue to bring the best research and resources from NC State and NC A&T State University to every county and the Cherokee Reservation. We strive to strengthen the economy through profitable, sustainable and safe food, forest and green industry systems; protect the environment and natural resources; and empower youth and families to lead healthier lives and become community leaders. We provide informal community-based learning opportunities and technical assistance to people, businesses and governments. Our research-based solutions can improve the way you live, work and play.

In the year 2019, our primary goal was to focus on customer service. N.C. Cooperative Extension continues to address the many issues facing our county, our state and our nation. Extension, with your help in 2020, will continue to shine as we continue our focus on meeting the needs of citizens. There are only a few organizations that continue to have the longevity that Extension has experienced. This was only made possible by your support of the many programs that we offer, and again we say thank you.

Extension has and will continue to address many issues facing our county. We take pride in making sure we have a positive impact within the County. We remain committed to working in areas true to Extension's mission that are important to our customers.

The Columbus County Extension team has worked extremely hard as we are still rebuilding from the effects of hurricanes that were in 2018.

Please accept our thanks for your time, interest and support throughout the year. As always, we thank you for your continued support.

Agenda Item #9: SHERIFF - CREATION and IMPLEMENTATION of new UPDATED POLICES:

The Honorable Sheriff Jody Greene requested Board approval of \$49,961.00 for creation and implementation of new updated polices for both the Sheriff's Office and Detention Center to decrease risk and liability.

After discussion was conducted, it was the general consensus of the Board to table this Agenda Item until the next meeting (December 07, 2020).

Agenda Item #10: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - COMMITMENT LETTER to PNG to EXPEND \$50,000:

Gary Lanier, Economic Development Director, requested Board approval to expend \$50,000 to establish a natural gas distribution system in Tabor City.

Commissioner Prevatte made a motion to approve to expend fifty thousand and 00/100 (\$50,000.00) dollars to establish a natural gas distribution system in Tabor City, seconded by Commissioner Burroughs. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #11: PURCHASING - UPDATE of PURCHASE ORDERS, POLICY III-2:

Stuart Carroll, Purchasing Director, requested Board approval of the update to Purchase Orders, Policy III-2. **(This will be the second reading.)**

Commissioner Prevatte made a motion to approve the update of Purchase Orders Policy, Policy # III-2, on the second reading, seconded by Vice Chairman McMillian. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #12: PURCHASING - UPDATE of PURCHASE ORDERS, POLICY III-6, CREDIT CARD PROCEDURE/APPLICATION:

Stuart Carroll, Purchasing Director, requested Board approval of the update to the Purchase Orders Policy, #III-6 Credit Card Procedure/Application. **(This will be the second reading.)**

Commissioner McDowell made a motion to approve the update to the Purchase Order Policy, #III-6, on the second reading, seconded by Commissioner Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #13: PURCHASING - ESTABLISH a BID PROTEST PROCEDURE POLICY II-13:

Stuart Carroll, Purchasing Director, requested Board approval to establish a Bid Protest Procedure. **(This will be the second reading.)**

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve to establish a Bid Protest Procedure, on the second reading, seconded by Commissioner Prevatte. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #14: SOCIAL SERVICES - MONTHLY ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE:

Algernon McKenzie, Social Services Director, delivered the following October 2020 Administrative Update.

Columbus County DSS continues to participate in Covid-19 Planning Team calls three times each week at 9am. Updates are given on the County's and State's Covid-19 status to assist in safety measures for our employees; as well as how to access resources for our citizens.

Our department experienced some staff turnover during the month of October. We have been able to fill some positions from within and have advertised for the others.

We have received Covid-19 funds from DHHS to assist with Adult Protective Services and Child Protective Services. These funds are to be used to support teleworking activities to ensure the safety of staff while completing mandated visits. We received \$41,683.00. These funds will be used to purchase lap tops and personal protective equipment to assist APS/CPS staff with virtual court sessions, visits and required virtual trainings during this pandemic. We are working with our county MIS Department to get information needed to make purchases. These funds must be expended by December 31, 2020.

During the month, I participated on two statewide calls and a webinar with the Director's Association. We received an update on Medicaid Transformation; which is scheduled to take place in July of 2021. This will require that Medicaid recipients enroll in a health plan with one of the five providers across the State. There will be a website developed to provide information to the public and training provided to DSS staff on Medicaid Managed Care.

We were informed the MOU between DHHS and local counties would be sent out to counties by October 12, 2020. All counties are required to sign the MOU and return it by the end of December. The MOU outlines program requirements and performance standards in the various program areas administered by the local DSS agencies. This is an annual agreement, however, due to the pandemic, the new agreements will be for eighteen months. It will be effective January 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022.

We are now starting to prepare for the Energy Assistance Program season. We are now able to complete phone interviews when individuals complete an application for heating assistance through the Crisis Intervention Program (CIP). Individuals must meet the income guidelines and can receive up to \$600.00 in assistance with their heating source, including wood. Applications are available in our lobby or can be printed from the State website.

Lastly, we are continuing to provide personal protective equipment and cleaning common areas throughout the day. Washing hands, wearing masks and social distancing continue to be stressed during work hours.

October 2020
Economic Services

PROGRAM	STATISTICS
Food & Nutrition	Applications Taken: 140 Applications Approved: 164 Active Cases: 5,994 Benefits Issued: \$2,182,414.00 Participants Served: 12,104
Adult Medicaid	Applications Taken: 105 Cases Terminated: 12 Redeterminations: 493 Applications Processed: 180
Family & Children's Medicaid	Applications Taken: 291 Applications Processed: 164 Redeterminations: 510 Total Medicaid Cases: 14,010 Total Individuals Receiving: 20,987

Child Support	Absent Parents Located: 52 Orders Enforced: 936 Active Cases: 3,654 Collections: \$490,278.78
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October 2020
Human Services

<u>PROGRAM</u>	<u>STATISTICS</u>
<u>Adult Services (APS)</u>	APS Reports Accepted: 6 County Wards: 26 Number of Payee Cases: 20 Adults Served APS: 2 Number of Medicaid Transportation Trips: 634 Amount Requested for Reimbursement: \$5,191.92
<u>Children's Protective Services (CPS)</u>	Reports Accepted: 23 Reports Screened out: 41 Families Receiving In-Home Services: 45 Children Served: 81 Contacts with Families Monthly: 505 Assessments: 17
<u>Foster Care</u>	Foster Children in Foster Homes: 76 Children Placed Outside County: 10 Agency Adoptions: 0 Pending Adoptions: 2 Total Foster Homes Licensed: 5 Total Children in Foster Care: 78
<u>Work first Employment (TANF)</u>	Applications Taken: 23 Applications Approved: 11 Individuals Receiving Benefits: 243 Entered Employment: 0 Number in Non-Paid Work Experience: 0
<u>Program Integrity</u>	Collections for Fraud: \$3,217.05 New Referrals: 14 Cases Established: 9
<u>Day Care</u>	Children Receiving Day Care Assistance: 392 Children on the Waiting List: 438 Amount Spent on Day Care Services: \$160,994.31

Economic Services Program Narrative

Child Support/Paralegal and Work First Cash/Medicaid Transportation/Maintenance and Housekeeping

Food and Nutrition and Family and Children's Medicaid

Adult Medicaid//Rest Home and Nursing Home/Community Alternatives Program (CAP)

Submitted by Cyndi Hammonds, Income Maintenance Administrator

Reporting Month: October 2020

News/Updates/Vacancies

Food and Nutrition:

Each month with this pandemic brings a different change for workers to have to keep up with. USDA has approved a waiver for the interview for applications and recertifications. September policy went back to having to complete an interview for both but got approval late in October to waive the interviews unless something is questionable. The maximum allotments for all households was also approved again for October. The waiver for participants to have to work or volunteer a certain number of hours also continues which is making more and more people eligible for benefits and has increased the caseloads. This team has 1 vacancy and 1 new in training.

Adult and Family & Children's Medicaid:

- The Adult Team consist of Medicaid for Adults at home (PLA-Private Living Arrangement), Adults who are in a Rest Home (Special Assistance); Adults with Rest Home level of care but with a supplemental cash payment can remain at home (Special Assistance In-Home); Adults in a Nursing Home (Long Term Care) and Adults with Nursing Home level of care but can safely remain at home with extra help from an aide (CAP – Community Alternative Program). The “Long Term Care Team” – just completed a virtual cluster meeting with other counties and were informed workers working in Special Assistance will have to pass and receive a certification for the Basic Core Testing in NCFAST coming soon. They stated this will be basically functionality in NCFAST and the very basic policy of the Special Assistance program. Adult Medicaid is very complex however the Long Term Care Team which consist of cases for Special Assistance, Special Assistance In-Home, Nursing Home and CAP programs are even more complex than the basic Medicaid in that workers have to investigate into transfer of assets, trust funds and wills and completing how much money is due from the client to the nursing home each month. These cases can get very complicated and when there are vacancies the other workers are not trained in these programs and the supervisors are having to carry caseloads in order for them to get processed. We currently have 4 vacancies on the Adult Team with 1 of those vacancies being on that team and 2 in training.
- The Family & Children's Medicaid Team continues to have the state process some of their applications prior to them reaching the county. They have been able to help Food and Nutrition complete interviews during their time of being short staffed last month. Both Teams are still unable to terminate clients unless they are deceased, move out of state or request to be removed from the program which has increased their caseloads. This team has 3 vacancies.

Child Support and Paralegal:

Child Support continues to utilize Hallsboro School for court and had to cancel 2 scheduled court dates due to COVID. They continue to utilize phone conferences with applicants and absent parents but have schedule appointments to come to the agency for those that wish to sign a Voluntary Support Agreement, Consents and DNA testing. They prepared 465 cases for court but only heard 275 partially due to the two cancelled court days that had to be continued. This Team has 3 vacancies and one still in training and the clerical position recently being filled with the new worker beginning employment with the agency in November.

Work First Cash/Medicaid Transportation/Interpreter/Maintenance and Housekeeping/Deputy:

- WorkFirst continues to complete applications and recertification timely.
- We continue to have issues with billing with Medicaid Transportation and are still waiting on the Help Desk to work out the issues.
- Our Interpreter continues to help with transportation and the Energy Programs when not interpreting.
- Maintenance and Housekeeping continue to clean and sanitize the building throughout the day.

Commissioner Burroughs made a motion to accept the Social Services Monthly Administrative Update, seconded by Vice Chairman McMillian. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #15: SOCIAL SERVICES - MEMORANDUM of UNDERSTANDING (FISCAL YEAR 2020-21 AND 2021-22):

Algernon McKenzie, Social Services Director, requested Board approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and Columbus County.

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding (Fiscal Year 2020-21 and 2021-22) Between The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and Columbus County, seconded by Vice Chairman McMillian. This document will be marked as Exhibit “A”, and kept on file in Minute Book Attachments, Book Number 6, in the Clerk to the Board's Office, for review.

Agenda Item #16: PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION - NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT of TRANSPORTATION and ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS:

Joy Jacobs, Public Transportation Director, requested the Board to approve and authorize the Chairman to sign resolution and all related documents for our Transportation Grant for FY 21-22. In addition, authorize the County Attorney and Chairman to sign the Certificates of Assurances to arrive at a later date.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM RESOLUTION
FY 2021 RESOLUTION

Section 54311 (including \ADTAP),. 5310, 5339, 5307 and applicable State funding, or combination thereof.

Applicant seeking permission to apply for Public Transportation Program funding, enter into agreement with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, provide the necessary assurances and the required local match.

A motion was made by Commissioner Giles E. Byrd and seconded by Vice Chairman Jerome McMillian for the adoption of the following resolution, and upon being put to a vote was duly adopted.

WHEREAS, Article 2B of Chapter 136 of the North Carolina General Statutes and the Governor of North Carolina have designated the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) as the agency responsible for administering federal and state public transportation funds; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Transportation will apply for a grant from the US Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration and receives funds from the North Carolina General Assembly to provide assistance for rural public transportation projects; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of these transportation funds is to provide grant monies to local agencies for the provision of rural, small urban, and urban public transportation services consistent with the policy requirements of each funding source for planning, community and agency involvement, service design, service alternatives, training and conference participation, reporting and other requirements (drug and alcohol testing policy and program, disadvantaged business enterprise program, and fully allocated costs analysis); and

WHEREAS, the funds applied for may be Administrative, Operating, Planning, or Capital funds and will have different percentages of federal, state, and local funds; and

WHEREAS, non-Community Transportation applicants may apply for funding for “purchase-of-service” projects under the Capital Budget Section 5310 program.

WHEREAS, COLUMBUS COUNTY hereby assures and certifies that it will provide the required local matching funds; that its staff has the technical capacity to implement and manage the project(s), prepare required reports, obtain required training, attend meetings and conferences; and agrees to comply with the federal and state statutes, regulations, executive orders, Section 5333 (b) Warranty, and all administrative requirements which relates to the applications made to and grants received from the Federal Transit Administration, as well as the provisions of Section 1001 of Title 18, U. S. C.

WHEREAS, the applicant has or will provide all annual certifications and assurances to the State of North Carolina required for the project.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Chairman of the Columbus County Commissioners is hereby authorized to submit a grant application for federal and state funding, make the necessary assurances and certifications and be empowered to enter into an agreement with the NCDOT to provide rural, small urban, and urban public transportation services.

I, June B. Hall, Clerk to Board, do hereby certify that the above is a true and correct copy of an excerpt from the minutes of a meeting of the Columbus County Commissioners duly held on the 16th day of November, 2020.

/s/ JUNE B. HALL
Signature of Certifying Official

*Note that the authorized official, certifying official, and notary public should be three separate individuals.

Subscribed and sworn to me: 11/18/2020.

/s/ Paulette A. Varnam
Notary Public *
111 Washington Street, Whiteville, NC 28472
Address

Seal

My commission expires: 08-18-2022.

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and Columbus County, seconded by Vice Chairman Jerome McMillian. The motion unanimously passed.

DISCUSSION:

Discussion was conducted relative to Joy Jacobs having improved internet service. Commissioner Bullard made a motion to allow Joy Jacobs, Public Transportation Director, to have her own internet service, seconded by Vice Chairman McMillian. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #17: AGING - ADDITIONAL FUNDS for PURCHASE of TRANSPORTATION VAN:

Kristie Massey, Director of Aging, requested approval of \$36,388 from state contract and additional funds from the County's General Fund for the transportation van.

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve thirty-six thousand, three hundred eighty-eight 00/100 (\$36,388.00) dollars for the purchase of a transportation van, seconded by Commissioner Bullard. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #18: SOIL and WATER CONSERVATION - INCREASE The BEAVER BOUNTY to \$60.00:

Edward E. Davis, Soil and Water Conservation Director, requested the Board to allow the increase for beaver bounty to sixty and 00/100 (\$60.00) dollars. **(This item was tabled at the November 02, 2020 Meeting until this meeting.)**

Commissioner Burroughs made a motion to table this Agenda Item until the next meeting and request that information be forwarded on how to streamline the amount of paperwork that is presently being used, seconded by Commissioner Bullard. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #19: TAX - 2021 REVALUATION SCHEDULE OF VALUES:

Needom G. Hughes, IV, Tax Administrator, requested Board Approval of the 2021 Revaluation Schedule of Values. **(Per Needom Hughes: Large box of Property Appraisal Manuals were delivered to the Administration Office.)**

Commissioner McDowell made a motion to approve the 2021 Revaluation Schedule of Values, seconded by Commissioner Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #20: TAX - RESOLUTION to SUPPORT DROPPING the PROPERTY TAX RATE:

Michael Stephens, County Manager, requested Board approval of the following Resolution of Revaluation of Property for County Property Tax.

**RESOLUTION of REVALUATION of PROPERTY
for COUNTY PROPERTY TAX**

WHEREAS, the revaluation of property for County Property Tax purposes will create over \$2 million in additional tax revenue for Columbus County; **and**

WHEREAS, this additional revenue will come from increases in property tax payments by Columbus County citizens; **and**

WHEREAS, the economy is uncertain at this time due to COVID-19.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RE SOLVED, we, the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County, do hereby resolve to consider reducing property tax rates during the adoption of the 2021-2022 budget ordinance.

ADOPTED this the 16th day of November, 2020.

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

/s/ **P. EDWIN RUSS**

ATTESTED BY:

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

Commissioner Bullard made a motion to table this Agenda Item until the next meeting, seconded by Vice Chairman McMillian. A roll-call vote was taken with the following results:

AYES: Vice Chairman McMillian and Commissioner Bullard; **and**

NAYS: Chairman Russ, Commissioners Prevatte, McDowell, Byrd and Burroughs.

The motion fails on a five (5) to two (2) vote.

Commissioner Prevatte made a motion to accept the Resolution, as presented, seconded by

Commissioner McDowell. A roll-call vote was taken with the following results.

AYES: Chairman Russ, Commissioners Prevatte, McDowell, Bullard and Burroughs; **and**
NAYS: Vice Chairman McMillian and Commissioner Bullard.

The motion passes on a five (5) to two (2) vote.

Agenda Item #21: LEGAL - EASEMENT TO DUKE ENERGY:

Amanda B. Prince, County Attorney, requested Board approval of an Easement to Duke Energy for a new power line to be constructed next to James B. White Highway on the Department of Social Services and Cooperative Extension properties.

Commissioner McDowell made a motion to approve an Easement to Duke Energy for a new power line to be constructed next to James B. White Highway on the Department of Social Services and Cooperative Extension properties, seconded by Commissioner Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #22: ADMINISTRATION - HMGP MATTHEW GRANT:

Mike Stephens, County Manager, requested Board approval of the low bidder, Corbett Clearing and Demolition for \$37,500, for the HMGP Matthew Grant, from the following Bidders List.

Recommendation of Award (Demolition Group #2)
 Columbus County HMGP - Matthew
 October 27, 2020
 2:15 P.M.

<u>COMPANY</u>	<u>COST</u>
Barfield's Backhoe Herr, Inc.	\$49,385.00 \$44,375.00
Corbett Clearing & Demolition	\$37,500.00
Tracco, LLC	\$105,980.00

Commissioner Bullard made a motion to approve the low bidder, Corbett Clearing and Demolition, for thirty-seven thousand, five hundred and 00/100 (\$37,500) dollars, for the HMGP Matthew Grant, seconded by Commissioner Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #23: ADMINISTRATION - EARLY DISTRIBUTION of PAYROLL CHECKS and CHRISTMAS BONUSES:

Michael Stephens, County Manager, requested Board approval of the distribution of payroll checks and Christmas bonuses on December 18, 2020.

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve the distribution of payroll checks and Christmas bonuses on December 18, 2020, seconded by Commissioner Prevatte. The motion unanimously passed.

RECESS REGULAR SESSION and enter into COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV and V BOARD MEETING:

At 7:19 P.M., Commissioner Bullard made a motion to recess Regular Session and enter into a **combination meeting** of Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V Board Meeting, seconded by Vice Chairman McMillian. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #24: COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV and V BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

November 02, 2020 Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V Board Meeting (5 Sets)

This information will be recorded in Minute Book Number 2 for each Water District, respectively.

ADJOURN COMBINATION MEETING of COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV AND V BOARD MEETING:

At 7:21 P.M., Vice Chairman McMillian made a motion to adjourn the **combination meeting** of Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V Board Meeting, seconded by

Commissioner Prevatte. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #25: PUBLIC INPUT (BY TELEPHONE, E-MAIL OR LETTER).

Chairman Russ opened the floor for Public Input. No Public Input was received either orally or written.

Agenda Item #26: CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

A motion was made by Commissioner Byrd to approve the following Consent Agenda Items, seconded by Commissioner Prevatte. The motion unanimously passed.

A. Budget Amendments:

TYPE	ACCOUNT	DETAILS	AMOUNT
Expenditures	10-6111-526000	LSTA Grant - Office Supplies	3,319
Revenues	10-3610-430118	Library LSTA COVID-19 Grant	3,319
Expenditures	10-5865-519001	Contracted Services	9,900
Revenues	10-3580-484006	Charitable Home Delivered Meals	9,900
Expenditures	10-5865-519001	Contracted Services	4,950
Revenues	10-3586-484006	BCBSNC - Meals on Wheels	4,950
Expenditures	68-4520-550010	Capital from NCDOT	65,968
Revenues	68-3452-430080	NCDOT Admin & Capital Reimbursement	64,095
	68-3452-498020	From Reserves	1,873
Expenditures	51-4533-519000	Professional Services	299,567
Revenues	51-3453-432002	Airport Grant 36237.53.14.1	269,610
	51-3453-432071	Airport IMP 53.14.1 - Local Match	29,957
Expenditures	10-5301-533001	CP&L Energy (Energy Neighbor)	3,678
	10-5301-524016	APS/CPS Assessments	41,682
Revenues	10-3530-430076	CP&L Energy (Energy Neighbor)	3,678
	10-3530-440076	APS/CPS Assessments	41,682
Expenditures	20-4350-526000	Office Supplies	5,000
Revenues	20-3318-430172	COVID 19 Cares Act Revenue	5,000

B. Tax Refunds and Releases:

Property Value Amount: \$78.89
 Harwood, Vickie Cartrette PROPERTY: 76294 Total: \$86.73
 Value: \$2,700.00 Year: 2020 Account: 11-00953 Bill#: 76346
 Release portion of value. SHB partially exempt. Release Hallsboro Fire(5.88) release
 Whiteville Rescue(1.96)

Property Value Amount: \$430.28
 Bellamy, Gracie (Heirs) PROPERTY: 23511 Total: \$1,215.40
 Value: \$10,000.00 Year: 11-17 Account: 13-01820 Bill#: 99999
 Release value. Sold at tax sale. Vacant for years. Release Columbus Rescue(10.64)

Property Value Amount: \$68.43
 Cason, Karim PROPERTY: 97374 Total: \$80.33
 Value: \$98,400.00 Year: 2020 Account: 15-03723 Bill#: 63878
 Release portion Rebilled to Acct#15-32820. Release Acme Delco(10.20) release
 Columbus Rescue(1.70)

Property Value Amount: \$30.05
 Down South Logging LLC PROPERTY: 00000 Total: \$34.52
 Value: \$45,135.00 Year: 2019 Account: 06-02725 Bill#: 95567
 Release value of truck. Junked . Release Yam City Fire(3.73) release Columbus

Rescue(.74)

Property Value

Down South Logging LLC	PROPERTY: 00000	Amount:	\$540.80
Value: \$19,035.00 Year: 19-20	Account: 06-02725	Total:	\$621.42
		Bill#:	99999

Release value of truck. Junked. Release Yam City Fire(67.18) release Columbus Rescue(13.44)

Property Value

Freeman, Rossie M.	PROPERTY: 8817	Amount:	\$1,118.95
Value: \$27,800.00 Year: 16-20	Account: 04-05420	Total:	\$1,230.15
		Bill#:	99999

Release portion of values. Discovery Run. Release Buckhead Fire(83.40) release Columbus Rescue(27.80)

Property Value

McKenzie, Aaron D & Connie F	PROPERTY: 90763	Amount:	\$323.84
Value: \$4,300.00 Year: 11-20	Account: 12-01234	Total:	\$971.46
		Bill#:	99999

Release value sold at tax sale. Never a structure. Release Evergreen Fire(28.08) release Columbus Rescue(8.02) release Water II(11.52)

Property Value

Palmer, Douglas L. & Mariogene	PROPERTY: 95514	Amount:	\$539.35
Value: \$67,600.00 Year: 2020	Account: 11-00319	Total:	\$552.75
		Bill#:	90803

Release portion of value. Land location incorrect valued to high. Release Columbus Rescue(13.40)

Property Value

Sales Ward Auto	PROPERTY: 00000	Amount:	\$16.49
Value: \$2,049.00 Year: 2020	Account: 01-08646	Total:	\$18.59
		Bill#:	95491

Release value of boat. Sold and billed to Act#13-04648. Release Whiteville Rescue(.41) release late list(1.69)

Property Value

Stanley Hubert C Jr. & Brenda	PROPERTY: 16908	Amount:	\$634.34
Value: \$78,800.00 Year: 2020	Account: 09-02168	Total:	\$697.38
		Bill#:	99962

Release property value. Rebilled Act#09-03746. Release Williams Fire(47.28) release Columbus Rescue(15.76)

User Fee

Brown, Joseph Eugene & Carolyn	PROPERTY: 27801	Amount:	\$0.00
Value: \$0.00 Year: 2020	Account: 15-05760	Total:	\$200.00
		Bill#:	61133

Release user fee. Vacant .

User Fee

County of Columbus	PROPERTY: 00000	Amount:	\$0.00
Value: \$0.00 Year: 2020	Account: 01-17501	Total:	\$113.00
		Bill#:	65614

Release 1 can.

User Fee

Daniels, Wilbert & Sadie Mae	PROPERTY: 8661	Amount:	\$0.00
Value: \$0.00 Year: 2020	Account: 04-03080	Total:	\$200.00
		Bill#:	66632

Release user fee. Home burned.

User Fee

Dixon, Deartus (ETAL)	PROPERTY: 28111	Amount:	\$0.00
Value: \$0.00 Year: 2019	Account: 15-05088	Total:	\$200.00
		Bill#:	95280

Release user fees. Vacant

User Fee

Ellis Carl Sr (Dec)	PROPERTY: 96923	Amount:	\$0.00
Value: \$0.00 Year: 2020	Account: 12-00629	Total:	\$200.00
		Bill#:	68982

Release user fee. Unliveable.

User Fee

Gore, William Thomas	PROPERTY: 15779	Amount:	\$0.00
Value: \$0.00 Year: 2020	Account: 09-03858	Total:	\$200.00
		Bill#:	73899

Release user fee.

User Fee

Hayes, Elizabeth Tedder (Heirs)	PROPERTY: 20247	Amount:	\$0.00
Value: \$0.00 Year: 19-20	Account: 11-12480	Total:	\$400.00
		Bill#:	99999

Release user fees. Unliveable.

User Fee

Hayes, Jerry Leon	PROPERTY: 81622	Amount:	\$0.00
Value: \$0.00 Year: 11-20	Account: 11-12540	Total:	\$823.00
		Bill#:	99999

Release user fees. Billed on land.

<i>User Fee</i>			Amount:	\$0.00
Johnson, Norwood Randolph		PROPERTY: 2807	Total:	\$113.00
Value: \$0.00	Year: 2020	Account: 01-00928	Bill#:	80672
Release user fee. Unliveable.				
<i>User Fee</i>			Amount:	\$0.00
Lennon, Donna		PROPERTY: 78037	Total:	\$200.00
Value: \$0.00	Year: 2020	Account: 15-23523	Bill#:	83003
Release user Fee. Unliveable				
<i>User Fee</i>			Amount:	\$0.00
Nobles, Willie Howard & Roxie		PROPERTY: 25209	Total:	\$200.00
Value: \$0.00	Year: 2020	Account: 13-30940	Bill#:	89949
Release user fee. Dbilled.				
<i>User Fee</i>			Amount:	\$0.00
Norris, Bobby Lee & Marvel Ann		PROPERTY: 25211	Total:	\$200.00
Value: \$0.00	Year: 2020	Account: 13-31040	Bill#:	89982
Release user fee. Dblisted.				
<i>User Fee</i>			Amount:	\$0.00
Norris, Edna J.		PROPERTY: 00000	Total:	\$600.00
Value: \$0.00	Year: 18-20	Account: 10-12928	Bill#:	99999
Release user fees. Single wide off for 2020.				
<i>User Fee</i>			Amount:	\$0.00
Page, Paul & Doris		PROPERTY: 25249	Total:	\$200.00
Value: \$0.00	Year: 2020	Account: 13-31720	Bill#:	90708
Release user fee. Uses a commercial hauler.				
<i>User Fee</i>			Amount:	\$0.00
Reeves, Ester Ward		PROPERTY: 00000	Total:	\$600.00
Value: \$0.00	Year: 18-20	Account: 01-75543	Bill#:	99999
Release user fees. Single wide off for 2020.				
<i>User Fee</i>			Amount:	\$0.00
Sellers, Graham & Agnes		PROPERTY: 16737	Total:	\$200.00
Value: \$0.00	Year: 2020	Account: 09-25600	Bill#:	96246
Release user fee. Dbl billed.				
<i>User Fee</i>			Amount:	\$0.00
Strickland, Stacey		PROPERTY: 00000	Total:	\$200.00
Value: \$0.00	Year: 2020	Account: 16-15412	Bill#:	1191
Release user fee. Unliveable.				
<i>User Fee</i>			Amount:	\$0.00
Watts, Ollen Stewart		PROPERTY: 12418	Total:	\$600.00
Value: \$0.00	Year: 2020	Account: 06-42460	Bill#:	5631
Release user fees. Overbilled				

C. **Agenda Item #5 (Moved):. PRESENTATIONS (Four -4-) AS FOLLOWS:**

A. **Proclamation of Recognition and Appreciation to James E. Prevatte for sixteen (16) years of service:**

Chairman Russ presented the following Proclamation of Recognition and Appreciation to Commissioner James E. Prevatte, along with a plaque for sixteen (16) years of service.

PROCLAMATION of APPRECIATION
to
JAMES EDWARD PREVATTE

WHEREAS, JAMES EDWARD PREVATTE has served the citizens of Columbus County as a County Commissioner from December 2004 to December 2020; **and**

WHEREAS, during the tenure of *Commissioner Prevatte*, his attributes were well known, with strong emphasis on improving the quality of life for the people of Columbus County, as follows:

- **Strong emphasis on the importance of a good education and providing assistance to**

the school systems;

- Served as Chairman for two (2) back-to-back terms, and as Vice Chairman of the Columbus County Board of Commissioners, and on multiple committees, boards and councils when needed or appointed;
- Genuine love and concern for the citizens of Columbus County;
- Continuously searched for avenues of assistance to the citizens of Columbus County;
- Strong devotion to family, with emphasis on the vital role of a good family; and
- *Commissioner Prevatte* is known for his genuine concern for all the citizens of Columbus County, and also for the employees of Columbus County Government.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, that we, the Columbus County Board of Commissioners, proudly present this **Proclamation of Appreciation** to **JAMES EDWARD PREVATTE** for his commitment, dedication, leadership and loyalty to the citizens of Columbus County during his sixteen (16) years of service; and

BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED, that we wish to extend a heart-felt **Thank You** to **JAMES EDWARD PREVATTE** for his friendship and the fellowship that we have shared over the years.

ADOPTED this the 16th day of November, 2020.

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

/s/ **P. EDWIN RUSS**, Chairman

/s/ **GILES E. BYRD**

/s/ **TRENT BURROUGHS**

/s/ **JEROME McMILLIAN**, Vice Chairman

/s/ **RICKY BULLARD**

/s/ **CHARLES T. McDOWELL**

ATTESTED BY:

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

/s/ **AMANDA B. PRINCE**, County

Attorney

/s/ **MICHAEL H. STEPHENS**, County Manager

- B. **Proclamation of Recognition and Appreciation to Trent Burroughs for eight (8) years of Service.**

Chairman Russ presented the following Proclamation of Appreciation and Recognition to Commissioner Trent Burroughs for his eight (8) years of service, along with a plaque.

PROCLAMATION of APPRECIATION

to

GORDON TRENT BURROUGHS

WHEREAS, **GORDON TRENT BURROUGHS** has served the citizens of Columbus County as a County Commissioner from December 2012 to December 2020; and

WHEREAS, during the tenure of *Commissioner Burroughs*, his attributes were well known, with strong emphasis on improving the quality of life for the people of Columbus County, as follows:

- Pleasant personality and willingness to listen;
- Strong emphasis on the importance of advancement in physical and technological conditions within the county ;
- Served as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Columbus County Board of Commissioners, and on multiple committees, boards and councils when needed or appointed;
- Genuine love and concern for the citizens of Columbus County;
- Continuously searched for avenues of help, and assistance for the citizens of Columbus County;
- Strong devotion to family; and
- *Commissioner Burroughs* is known for his genuine concern for all the citizens of Columbus County, and for the employees of Columbus County Government.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, that we, the Columbus County Board of Commissioners, proudly present this **Proclamation of Appreciation** to **GORDON TRENT BURROUGHS** for his commitment, dedication, leadership and loyalty to the citizens of Columbus County during his eight (8) years of service; and

BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED, that we wish to extend a heart-felt **Thank You** to **GORDON TRENT BURROUGHS** for his friendship and the fellowship that we have shared over the years.

ADOPTED this the 16th day of November, 2020.

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

/s/ **P. EDWIN RUSS**, Chairman
 /s/ **JAMES E. PREVATTE**
 /s/ **RICKY BULLARD**

/s/ **JEROME McMILLIAN**, Vice Chairman
 /s/ **GILES E. BYRD**
 /s/ **CHARLES T. McDOWELL**

ATTESTED BY:

/s/ **MICHAEL H. STEPHENS**, County Manager

/s/ **JUNE B. HALL**, Clerk to the Board
 /s/ **AMANDA B. PRINCE**, County Attorney

C. **Proclamation of Recognition and Appreciation to P. Edwin Russ for twelve (12) years of Service; and**

Vice Chairman Jerome McMillian presented Chairman P. Edwin Russ the following Proclamation of Appreciation for the twelve (12) years of service, along with a plaque.

PROCLAMATION of APPRECIATION
to
PAISLEY EDWIN RUSS

WHEREAS, **PAISLEY EDWIN RUSS** has served the citizens of Columbus County as a County Commissioner from December 2008 to December 2020; **and**

WHEREAS, during the tenure of **Commissioner Russ**, his attributes were well known, with strong emphasis on improving the quality of life for the people of Columbus County, as follows:

- **Pleasant personality and willingness to listen;**
- **Served as Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Columbus County Board of Commissioners, and on multiple committees, boards and councils when needed or appointed;**
- **Genuine love and concern for people, and the citizens of Columbus County;**
- **Continuously searched for avenues of help, and assistance for the citizens of Columbus County;**
- **Strong devotion to family; and**
- **Commissioner Russ is known for his genuine concern for all the citizens of Columbus County, and for the employees of Columbus County Government.**

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED, that we, the Columbus County Board of Commissioners, proudly present this **Proclamation of Appreciation** to **PAISLEY EDWIN RUSS** for his commitment, dedication, leadership and loyalty to the citizens of Columbus County during his twelve (12) years of service; **and**

BE IT FURTHER PROCLAIMED, that we wish to extend a heart-felt **Thank You** to **PAISLEY EDWIN RUSS** for his friendship and the fellowship that we have shared over the years.

ADOPTED this the 16th day of November, 2020.

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

/s/ **JEROME McMILLIAN**, Vice Chairman
 /s/ **GILES E. BYRD**
 /s/ **RICKY BULLARD**

/s/ **JAMES E. PREVATTE**
 /s/ **TRENT BURROUGHS**
 /s/ **CHARLES T. McDOWELL**

ATTESTED BY:

/s/ **MICHAEL H. STEPHENS**, County Manager

/s/ **JUNE B. HALL**, Clerk to the Board
 /s/ **AMANDA B. PRINCE**, County Attorney

Agenda Item #4 (MOVED): PRESENTATION - PLAQUE to OUTGOING CHAIRMAN P. EDWIN RUSS:

Vice Chairman Jerome McMillian presented the following plaque to Chairman Paisley

Edwin Russ for his year as Chairman of the Columbus County Board of Commissioners.

PRESENTED TO:

PAISLEY EDWIN RUSS

*** * * * ***

THIS THE 7th DAY OF DECEMBER 2020
in GRATEFUL APPRECIATION of YOUR DEVOTED LEADERSHIP
as CHAIRMAN to the BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

12-02-2019 - 12-07-2020

*** * * * ***

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Agenda Item #27: COMMENTS:

Chairman Russ opened the floor for comments. The following spoke.

B. Board of Commissioners:

1. **Commissioner Bullard:** stated the following:
 -I have enjoyed working with you guys;
 -Now, you will have more time to relax; **and**
 -I wish you the best.
2. **Commissioner McDowell:** stated the following:
 -I would like to thank you three (3) County Commissioners for all that you have done during your years of service to Columbus County; **and**
 -Please be responsible during the Thanksgiving Holiday.
3. **Vice Chairman McMillian:** stated I have enjoyed working with you three (3) County Commissioners, and I appreciate the knowledge that you have shared with me.
4. **Commissioner Byrd:** stated the following:
 -I have enjoyed working with you three (3) County Commissioners;
 -I would like to welcome the three (3) new Board members on board;
 -I would like for this Board to write a letter to North Carolina Department of Transportation here in Whiteville addressed to Ken Clark relative to a high stump at Hallsboro Middle School;
 -A big oak tree was cut approximately 2-3 weeks ago and left a 28" — 30" high stump at this location which is dangerous and needs to be grinded; **and**
 -This stump is not as easy to see as the tree was.
5. **Commissioner Burroughs:** stated the following:
 -It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve my friends and fellow citizens over the past eight (8) years as County Commissioner. I would also like to congratulate all of the newly elected Commissioners and wish them and the County much success over the next four (4) years. It will be as always, a balancing act, to adequately provide for all of the critical needs of our many departments in an equitable manner. I want everyone to know that I will always try to be available to assist in whatever way that I can, to help move the County forward.
 -I would now like to take a moment to share a few of what I feel are high points and successes that the Board was able to achieve over the last eight (8) years.

SCHOOLS:

1. This Board as been very prudent with the County's finances over the last eight (8) years. We did not ever raise taxes; actually we decreased taxes while at the same time accumulating a substantial fund balance. This fund afforded us the opportunity to provide \$9,000,000.00 as a down payment on the new County Schools that are to be built in Tabor City and Cerro

Gordo, and \$3,000,000.00 as a down payment for the new addition to Whiteville High School. Our strong finances also allowed for us to be able to borrow over \$35,000,000.00 for the balance of the County School construction and almost \$15,000,000.00 for the balance of the Whiteville City School construction.

2. We were able to increase our contribution to the County School System for Capital Outlay and Current Expenses by almost \$3,500,000.00 and the Whiteville City Schools by almost \$1,500,000.00, during the eight (8) year period.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

1. Over the past eight (8) years, we have received over \$5,500,000.00 in Building Reuse, Restoration and Infrastructure Grants to facilitate job creation.
2. We aggressively and successfully recruited R.J. Corman to return rail service to our County. Since that time, there has been over \$20,000,000.00 in Federal and State and Corporate funding to improve the rail infrastructure in the County. The County played a large role in this as myself and Commissioner McDowell spent considerable time in Washington, DC, successfully lobbying our National Legislators for \$12,800,000.00 in Tiger Grants that are being used to further improve our rail infrastructure.
3. The County purchased the Georgia Pacific plant to prevent it from being dismantled and later sold it to R.J. Corman for what I hope to be a future Free Trade Business Zone.
4. We successfully obtained grant funds to complete the sewer infrastructure at the International Logistics Park this year.
5. We completed the first in the State, County wide study by the NC Commerce's Rural Division, Job Creation Plan for Distressed Communities in Columbus County.
6. The Southeast Regional Industrial Park was certified as a foods and beverage site by Duke Energy, Austin Consulting and Garner Economics.
7. Provided \$200,000.00 for the Fair Bluff Library renovation. I worked very hard with Commissioner McMillian to help this project become a reality.
8. We partnered with the Town of Tabor City, The Jobs Foundation and Tabor City Committee of 100 to acquire The Brunswick Electric Facility located there to create a business incubator. It has been 100% occupied for most of its history. We learned that we can have a larger impact on our community when we have willing partners participating, allowing us to leverage our resources.

SAVINGS:

1. We saved the tax payers over \$1,000,000.00 per year by changing to the State Health Plan for employee health care. It took several years of lobbying to accomplish.
2. We saved the tax payers about \$1,500,000.00 per year by renegotiating with our garbage and leaf and limb providers.

PUBLIC UTILITIES:

1. We approved waterline extensions for Water Districts I, II, III and V, and approved for staff to submit an application for a loan grant and funds for District IV this year.
2. Received \$1,800,000.00 in grants to complete the interconnect between WD-I and WD-II.
3. Commissioner McDowell and I were successful again in lobbying our National Legislators in Washington for \$1,100,000.00 in grant funds for the Old Dock Water and Sewer Project to be completed in the spring of 2021.
4. We were successful in obtaining almost \$900,000.00 in grant funds for the Helena Chemical Waterline extension. Notice to proceed was supposed to be issued today.
5. Acquired the Riegelwood Sanitary District increasing our customer base providing better quality water to the citizens of that district.
6. Completed WD-IV, Hallsboro Waterline Extensions and Tank Project. A \$2,400,000.00 Project.

Again, these are just a few of the many successful projects the County has been involved in over the last eight (8) years. I want to thank the citizens for allowing me to play a part in bringing these projects to fruition for the benefit of the County.

6. **Commissioner Prevatte:** stated the following:

-It's been an honor to serve the citizens of Columbus County for sixteen (16) years as County Commissioner. When I began the job I felt, and I still do feel, that everyone should have a voice in government. I feel that I have been open and accessible to the concerns of the people.

-We have many things to be proud of in our county. Approximately two (2) years ago one of the visions that were expressed to me was better services for citizens who have mental health or substance abuse issues. The county has successfully disengaged from our previous local management entity, Eastpointe, and aligned with Trillium Health Services. Trillium provides more services to our residents that we have ever had. We now have a walk-in clinic at our Health Department providing services to those who need help for mental health and substance abuse.

-I've also always believed in supporting education. In the last ten (10) years we have steadily increased our allotments to the school systems in current expense and capital outlay. When looked at over ten (10) years, we have shown significant additions without a tax increase. This past year we also allocated an additional \$9 million to the county schools and \$3 million to the city schools for the construction

-Through our public utilities, this board has funded and approved numerous water line extensions in all areas of the county. We eliminated Water District 2 and 3 taxes. This tax was being charged to people in those water districts regardless if they were water customers or not. The taxes started before anyone on this board was elected. We also combined all water districts.

-We have also been looking at solid waste. Re-bid and negotiated contracts resulted in over \$1.5 million saved.

-While we've not been able to increase the raises of our employees at the rate we wanted, in the last ten (10) years we have increased raises approximately 28%.

-We also have received, through the efforts of staff, numerous grants to provide additional services without cost to the citizens. These have occurred in Parks and Recreation, County Airport, DSS, Economic Development and several other departments which would just take too much of your time to list.

-I must mention, though, after the last two (2) hurricanes, we received over \$2 million in grants for property that continues to be flooded.

-This year has been especially stressful on our county and our employees. The rages of the pandemic have left staff exhausted but they are rising to the challenge of finding new and safer ways to provide public service.

-During this time the Columbus County employee family has dealt with the problem of an unknown. We continue to fight the Coronavirus battle which may not be over for some time.

-To the staff I extend a heartfelt thank you for your services and dedication. Columbus County is a better county today, in my opinion, because of your efforts over these last sixteen (16) years.

7. **Chairman Paisley Edwin Russ:** stated the following:

-It has been a honor and pleasure to serve the citizens of Columbus County and the County Commissioners for the past twelve (12) years;

-This Board has given me the pleasure of serving as Chairman;

-I have also served on other committees and boards during this time;

-As I reflect on my years of service, the County has endured many difficulties;

-We have dealt with the effects of two (2) major hurricanes, along with the current pandemic which we are dealing with now;

-Being a County Commissioner is no easy task;

-There are always decisions that need to be made along with that responsibility, and you cannot make everyone happy;

-As a Commissioner, I have always tried to vote on what is better for our County;

-During my tenure, the property tax was never raised, and the Fund Balance is in the best shape it has ever been;

-This came about, the Board being as a whole, being good stewards of taxpayers' dollars;

-For the past several years, we have tried to rehabilitate the Historic Courthouse;

-It is my hope, that the future Board will take a look at preserving this beautiful historic building;

-It has been estimated that an update from ADA would cost from \$4 million to \$6

- million;
- Several years ago, the County set aside \$1.9 million from the sale of the Georgia-Pacific to be used for the Historic Courthouse;
- Some repairs have been made to the building, and we still have \$1,681,000 that can be used with those funds;
- Our County still needs additional space, and the Historic Courthouse could be used to supply some of the additional space that is needed;
- I have enjoyed working with the people of Columbus County, and I will miss the County employees the most;
- Columbus County has the best group of employees that put their hearts into this county;
- I have established good friendships with the County employees;
- I love Columbus County and I look forward to seeing this county to thrive and grow; **and**
- I wish this Board the best for the future, and may God bless you.

- C. County Manager (Michael H. Stephens):** handed a letter to Chairman Russ and requested that he orally read the following letter.

Columbus County Administration

November 16, 2020

Commissioner Edwin Russ, Chairman
Columbus County Board of Commissioners
111 Washington Street
Whiteville, North Carolina 28472

Re: Resignation

Dear Chairman Russ and Board of Commissioners:

Please accept this letter as notification that I will be retiring as Columbus County Manager, effective at the close of the workday on Monday, November 30, 2020.

Sincerely,

/s/ **MIKE STEPHENS**

Columbus County Manager

- D. County Attorney (Amanda B. Prince):** stated the following:
- I would like to thank the Commissioners for their service to the County;
 - I enjoy working with you; **and**
 - I wish you the best.

RECESS REGULAR SESSION and enter into CLOSED SESSION in ACCORDANCE with N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (6) PERSONNEL:

At 8:05 P.M., Commissioner McDowell made a motion to recess Regular Session and enter into Closed Session in Accordance with N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (6) Personnel, after a five (5) minute recess, seconded by Commissioner Burroughs. The motion unanimously passed.

E. CLOSED SESSION in ACCORDANCE with N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (6) PERSONNEL:

No official action was taken.

ADJOURN CLOSED SESSION and resume REGULAR SESSION:

At 8:17 P.M., Commissioner Burroughs made a motion to adjourn Closed Session and resume Regular Session, seconded by Commissioner Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

READING and APPROVAL of CLOSED SESSION GENERAL ACCOUNT:

Chairman Russ requested that Amanda B. Prince, County Attorney, orally read the Closed Session General Account. Ms. Prince orally read the following: *“The County Commissioners discussed personnel matters. No action was taken”*.

Commissioner Byrd made a motion to approve the Closed Session General Account, seconded by Commissioner McDowell. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #28: ADJOURNMENT;

At 8:19 P.M., Commissioner Byrd made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Bullard. The motion unanimously passed.

APPROVED:

JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board

P. EDWIN RUSS, Chairman

**COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV AND V
COMBINATION BOARD MEETING
Monday, November 16, 2020
7:19 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, 112 West Smith Street, Whiteville, North Carolina 28472, for the purpose to act as the Columbus County Water and Sewer District I Board.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

P. Edwin Russ, **Chairman**
Jerome McMillian, **Vice Chairman**
James E. Prevatte
Giles E. Byrd
Trent Burroughs
Ricky Bullard
Charles T. McDowell

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Mike Stephens, **County Manager**
Amanda B. Prince, **County Attorney**
June B. Hall, **Clerk to the Board**

APPOINTEE ABSENT:

Bobbie Faircloth, **Finance Officer**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

At 7:19 P.M., Chairman P. Edwin Russ called the **combination meeting** of Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V Board Meeting to order.

Agenda Item #24: COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV and V BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

November 02, 2020 Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V Board Meeting (**5 Sets**)

Commissioner Burroughs made a motion to approve the November 02, 2020 Columbus County Water and Sewer District I Board Meeting, as recorded, seconded by Commissioner McDowell. The motion unanimously passed.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:21 P.M., Vice Chairman McMillian made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Prevatte. The motion unanimously passed.

APPROVED:

JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board

P. EDWIN RUSS, Chairman

**COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV AND V
COMBINATION BOARD MEETING
Monday, November 16, 2020
7:19 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, 112 West Smith Street, Whiteville, North Carolina 28472, for the purpose to act as the Columbus County Water and Sewer District II Board.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

P. Edwin Russ, **Chairman**
Jerome McMillian, **Vice Chairman**
James E. Prevatte
Giles E. Byrd
Trent Burroughs
Ricky Bullard
Charles T. McDowell

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Mike Stephens, **County Manager**
Amanda B. Prince, **County Attorney**
June B. Hall, **Clerk to the Board**

APPOINTEE ABSENT:

Bobbie Faircloth, **Finance Officer**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

At 7:19 P.M., Chairman P. Edwin Russ called the **combination meeting** of Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V Board Meeting to order.

Agenda Item #24: COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV and V BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

November 02, 2020 Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V Board Meeting (**5 Sets**)

Commissioner Burroughs made a motion to approve the November 02, 2020 Columbus County Water and Sewer District II Board Meeting, as recorded, seconded by Commissioner McDowell. The motion unanimously passed.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:21 P.M., Vice Chairman McMillian made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Prevatte. The motion unanimously passed.

APPROVED:

JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board

P. EDWIN RUSS, Chairman

**COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV AND V
COMBINATION BOARD MEETING
Monday, November 16, 2020
7:19 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, 112 West Smith Street, Whiteville, North Carolina 28472, for the purpose to act as the Columbus County Water and Sewer District III Board.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

P. Edwin Russ, **Chairman**
Jerome McMillian, **Vice Chairman**
James E. Prevatte
Giles E. Byrd
Trent Burroughs
Ricky Bullard
Charles T. McDowell

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Mike Stephens, **County Manager**
Amanda B. Prince, **County Attorney**
June B. Hall, **Clerk to the Board**

APPOINTEE ABSENT:

Bobbie Faircloth, **Finance Officer**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

At 7:19 P.M., Chairman P. Edwin Russ called the **combination meeting** of Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V Board Meeting to order.

Agenda Item #24: COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV and V BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

November 02, 2020 Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V Board Meeting (**5 Sets**)

Commissioner Burroughs made a motion to approve the November 02, 2020 Columbus County Water and Sewer District III Board Meeting, as recorded, seconded by Commissioner McDowell. The motion unanimously passed.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:21 P.M., Vice Chairman McMillian made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Prevatte. The motion unanimously passed.

APPROVED:

JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board

P. EDWIN RUSS, Chairman

**COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV AND V
COMBINATION BOARD MEETING
Monday, November 16, 2020
7:19 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, 112 West Smith Street, Whiteville, North Carolina 28472, for the purpose to act as the Columbus County Water and Sewer District IV Board.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

P. Edwin Russ, **Chairman**
Jerome McMillian, **Vice Chairman**
James E. Prevatte
Giles E. Byrd
Trent Burroughs
Ricky Bullard
Charles T. McDowell

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Mike Stephens, **County Manager**
Amanda B. Prince, **County Attorney**
June B. Hall, **Clerk to the Board**

APPOINTEE ABSENT:

Bobbie Faircloth, **Finance Officer**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

At 7:19 P.M., Chairman P. Edwin Russ called the **combination meeting** of Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V Board Meeting to order.

Agenda Item #24: COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV and V BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

November 02, 2020 Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V Board Meeting (**5 Sets**)

Commissioner Burroughs made a motion to approve the November 02, 2020 Columbus County Water and Sewer District IV Board Meeting, as recorded, seconded by Commissioner McDowell. The motion unanimously passed.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:21 P.M., Vice Chairman McMillian made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Prevatte. The motion unanimously passed.

APPROVED:

JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board

P. EDWIN RUSS, Chairman

COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV AND V
COMBINATION BOARD MEETING
Monday, November 16, 2020
7:19 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, 112 West Smith Street, Whiteville, North Carolina 28472, for the purpose to act as the Columbus County Water and Sewer District V Board.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

P. Edwin Russ, **Chairman**
 Jerome McMillian, **Vice Chairman**
 James E. Prevatte
 Giles E. Byrd
 Trent Burroughs
 Ricky Bullard
 Charles T. McDowell

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Mike Stephens, **County Manager**
 Amanda B. Prince, **County Attorney**
 June B. Hall, **Clerk to the Board**

APPOINTEE ABSENT:

Bobbie Faircloth, **Finance Officer**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

At 7:19 P.M., Chairman P. Edwin Russ called the **combination meeting** of Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V Board Meeting to order.

Agenda Item #24: COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV and V BOARD MEETING MINUTES:

November 02, 2020 Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V Board Meeting (**5 Sets**)

Commissioner Burroughs made a motion to approve the November 02, 2020 Columbus County Water and Sewer District V Board Meeting, as recorded, seconded by Commissioner McDowell. The motion unanimously passed.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:21 P.M., Vice Chairman McMillian made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Prevatte. The motion unanimously passed.

APPROVED:

JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board

P. EDWIN RUSS, Chairman