



# County of Dare

P.O. Box 1000 | Manteo, NC 27954

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## MINUTES

### DARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### SPECIAL MEETING – BOARD RETREAT

To engage in a retreat for the purpose of discussing issues facing Dare County and take such action as may be needed.

Outer Banks Visitors Bureau Conference Room, Manteo, NC

**8:00 a.m., March 6, 2019**

Commissioners present: Chairman Robert Woodard, Vice Chairman Wally Overman  
Rob Ross, Steve House, Jim Tobin, Danny Couch, Ervin Bateman

Commissioners absent: None

Others present: County Manager/Attorney, Robert Outten  
Deputy County Manager/Finance Director, David Clawson  
Assistant Finance Director, Sally DeFosse  
Public Information Officer, Dorothy Hester  
Clerk to the Board, Gary Lee Gross

#### **ITEM 1 – WELCOME, PRAYER, PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

At 8:01 a.m. Chairman Woodard called to order the Special Meeting with appropriate prior public notice having been given. The Chairman then offered a prayer and led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag. Note – for scheduling purposes, some items were handled out of sequential order. During the retreat, two recess periods were taken (9:51 a.m. to 10:02 a.m. & 12:01 p.m. – 12:58 p.m.)

#### **ITEM 2 – PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FUND**

Andrew and Jeremy Carter from DEC Associates made a presentation on how the County could use a dedicated Capital Improvement Fund (CIF) to meet its long term capital needs. They outlined the merits of a CIF and explained how it would operate. Following the presentation, it was the consensus of the Board that the Manager should move forward with a CIF and incorporate it into the upcoming budget ordinance to be presented to the Board.

Following the CIF presentation, the Board addressed the following capital related items - - -

#### EMS Facilities - - -

The County Manager led the Board in a discussion of the facilities assessment conducted by Oakley Collier Architects. The Board agreed by consensus that staff should take the facilities assessment to the Capital Improvements Planning Committee for them to then evaluate and prioritize and make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners.

#### Work Force Housing - - -

The Board discussed the issue and the possibility of working with community stakeholders on the County's Bowsertown Road property. The Board addressed the challenges associated with determining what constitutes "affordable" housing. Commissioners gave guidance to the Manager to proceed with a Request for Proposal (RFP) to determine what might be feasible at the Bowsertown Road site at a rental price point range of \$800-\$1000-\$1200.

#### Public Works Facility - - -

The Manager outlined the need for new Public Works facilities on Roanoke Island and at the Buxton Transfer site. It was the consensus of the Board to have this issue put before the Capital Improvements Planning Committee.

#### Animal Shelter - - -

An update was given on work that is underway on the design phase of the project and the County Manager noted that construction estimates might be higher than initially planned due to industry-wide costs that have escalated for construction materials and labor.

#### DHHS Facility Expansion - - -

Renovation options were outlined. Option 1, at a projected cost of \$3.1 million, would meet current basic needs with no growth. Option 2, at a projected cost of \$4.8 million, would address current needs plus future growth. A 3<sup>rd</sup> option was outlined and discarded as not needed. Along with discussing facilities, the Board talked about the possibility of allowing designated employees to take home County owned vehicles in an effort to address the parking shortage at the site. The Board by consensus directed the County Manager to move forward by taking Option #2 to the Capital Improvements Planning Committee and authorized the Manager to implement a vehicle take home policy when he determines that it is needed.

#### COA Project - - -

It was reported that the bill before the legislature should soon be on the floor of the House of Representatives. The Manager reported that Requests for Proposals are ready to go as soon as the General Assembly takes action. He reminded the Board that the project, when completed, will result in one (1) multi-use facility at the Dare County COA campus...

#### Manteo Commons - - -

The Manager updated the Board on the project and noted that the County wants to be involved with the Town of Manteo on its design. He explained that the County will retain ownership of the land and advised that the Town of Manteo is pursuing grants for the project.

### **ITEM 3 – BEACH NOURISHMENT**

The County Manager and the Finance Director gave an overview on the funding model for beach nourishment projects throughout Dare County. The Board discussed how to best

address the demand for beach nourishment projects and how to prioritize projects based on the capacity determined by the funding models. Mr. Clawson briefed Commissioners on the status of the Buxton beach nourishment project.

#### **ITEM 4 – FACILITY SECURITY**

Mr. Outten asked Commissioners whether they wanted to have a security assessment done of all County facilities. It was the consensus of the Board to have an assessment done, which could then be considered in a future Capital Improvements Plan.

#### **ITEM 5 – MAINTENANCE OF NON-COUNTY OWNED FACILITIES**

The Manager asked the Board for guidance on whether the County should provide services for maintenance and upkeep at facilities that are not County owned. He cited examples of requests that have been made by non-profit groups in the community. The Board agreed that the Manager should draw the line and deny requests for non-county owned facilities.

#### **ITEM 6 – LEASE OF COUNTY SPACE TO FOR PROFIT BUSINESSES**

Mr. Outten asked for guidance on whether the Board is willing to lease space at County owned properties to profit based business operations. It was the consensus of the Board that these type of requests should be evaluated on a case by case basis

#### **ITEM 7 – EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

The Manager gave an overview of employee benefits since the economic downturn of 2008 including 401k contributions, longevity pay, and merit increases. This led to discussion of Cost of Living Increases (COLA's) and the most recent salary study to address compensation related compression issues. The Board encouraged the County Manager to come back with numbers for recommended action in the upcoming budget.

#### **ITEM 8 – SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION/WATERWAYS/PLANNING POSITION**

Mr. Outten explained that Ann Daisey currently serves as a Soil & Water Conservationist and works on stormwater, mitigation grants, and waterways duties. He noted that the scope of the position has grown beyond one person and outlined options for addressing the situation. He said one solution might be to have Ms. Daisey focus exclusively on Soil & Water and bring in an additional person to the Planning Department for the other duties as well as to provide additional support for Planning Director Donna Creef. Mr. Outten also informed the Board that the person performing administrative duties in Emergency Management is retiring and it may be beneficial to address expanding the scope of that position. The Manager then outlined another employment issue involving the possible hiring of a Professional Engineer. He described how this person might be able to provide management of beach nourishment projects and other County projects including development of a long term maintenance plan. It was the consensus of the Board to have the Manager address the issues he outlined by bringing them back to the Board as part of the upcoming budget presentation.

### **ITEM 9 – TRAINING**

The Manager cited the need for additional staff training throughout the County to address safety and other important issues. He outlined the need for a person to coordinate training across all departments. He described a way this might be accomplished by rearranging staff in the Human Resources Department. It was the consensus of the Board to have the Manager move forward in this direction.

### **ITEM 10 – SILENT DISPATCH**

Mr. Outten provided a heads-up about an issue that is being watched whereby 911 dispatch centers will be able to automatically direct some citizen calls based on the nature of the emergency. He described how this capability, which is on the horizon, might help address the ongoing difficulty hiring and retaining telecommunicators. He said this is something the County is watching in an endeavor to provide quality services in a less expensive way.

### **ITEM 11 – LIVE STREAM BOARD MEETINGS**

The Board was informed that the technology is now in place for video of Commissioner meetings to be live streamed on the internet in addition to the audio channel that is currently available. Mr. Outten noted that the approved minutes are the official record of the meeting and asked whether the Board wanted to authorize live video coverage of Commissioner meetings. Commissioners expressed interest in increasing transparency and public involvement and by consensus directed the County Manager to move forward with the video live stream of meetings when staff is ready.

### **ITEM 12 – TRASH CAN REMOVAL AFTER PICKUP**

The Manager asked the Board to consider what, if anything, should be done when people do not roll back their trash can after pickup. He outlined the ordinance that is in place and described the huge enforcement problems that are associated with it. The Public Information Officer informed Commissioners of an initiative that is underway with the municipalities to provide detailed information about trash pickup to residents and visitors via GIS. The Board agreed by consensus not to expand its enforcement action and not to hire people to roll back trash cans and directed staff to move forward with the public information initiative.

### **ITEM 13 – RULES OF BOARD PROCEDURE**

Mr. Outten summarized the role that Robert's Rules of Order now have in determining procedures for the conducting of Commissioner meetings. He noted that Robert's Rules are extremely detailed and comprehensive, which is why the UNC School of Government has assembled Suggested Rules of Procedure that incorporate key components of Robert's Rules along with practical guidance. He asked whether the Board wanted the Suggested Rules to be customized for Dare County and brought to the Board for adoption. By Consensus the Board directed the Manager to proceed.

### **ITEM 14 – COA TUITION FUNDING**

Chairman Woodard, as a College of the Albemarle Trustee, asked the Board whether it wanted to consider providing funding for local graduating high school seniors to have their

tuition covered for a two-year program at COA. It was noted that this type of program is being offered by two North Carolina counties and the Board discussed how such a program might be administered. Based on the number of Dare County graduates, the Board explored what could be accomplished with an appropriation of \$300,000. By consensus the Board agreed that the Manager should include this amount in the upcoming budget proposal, subject to details and logistics being worked out later.

#### **ITEM 15 – DISCUSS SCHEDULE FOR BUDGET WORKSHOPS**

The County Manager asked Assistant Finance Director Sally DeFosse to distribute a proposed list of dates related to assembling the upcoming budget. The Board agreed by consensus to follow the schedule, which would result in budget workshop(s) taking place during April and May. The Board was told that Ms. DeFosse will advise when the budget is ready for workshop activity and the Clerk will then coordinate Commissioner schedules.

#### **ITEM 16 – COMMISSIONERS AGENDA**

##### Vice Chairman Overman

- Informed the Board of a modernization plan and economic impact study that is underway for the Dare County Airport Authority, which will address the airport's long term viability.

##### Commissioner House

- Gave an update on legislation that has been introduced during the current legislative session in Raleigh. He outlined House Bill 157 which would impose a registration fee for bicycles and impose a fine for violations. He cited strong legislative and citizen response against the proposed bill and Commissioners voiced their opposition to it. Commissioner House said he would work with the Clerk to prepare a resolution at the appropriate time reflecting the Board's position.
- He noted that there are multiple bills before the State Legislature on the topic of abortion and reported that he has been told they may all be combined into one omnibus bill. He suggested that the Board wait to take action on this issue until that time.
- Commissioner House promised to keep the Board informed on local bills as they move through the General Assembly.

##### Commissioner Tobin

- Reported on his recent vacation trip and expressed thanks for being allowed to be absent.

##### Commissioner Bateman

- Asked for an update on the appropriation for Recovery Court money. Mr. Outten explained that a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is being developed that will direct stakeholders in the operation of the Recovery Court including the funding source for the administrative person for the endeavor. He advised that plans are to have the Recovery Court up and running within a few weeks.

##### Commissioner Couch

- Asked the Board to reconsider a possible opportunity for a public boat ramp in Buxton. He described a site that he said might be able to provide much needed boat access. The

County Manager outlined issues the State of North Carolina has with the proposed site due to its size and dimensional layout. Commissioner Couch asked for permission to talk further with the property owners and get back to the Board if anything positive develops. By consensus the Board agreed.

- Commissioner Couch also shared an idea to address the parking problems at the Fessenden Annex by possibly acquiring property owned by Mr. Jarvis. The Board agreed by consensus for Commissioner Couch to explore this with the property owner.
- He also reported positive news from Raleigh about the request that is pending for funding of the Graveyard of the Atlantic museum.

Commissioner Ross – No additional comments.

Chairman Woodard

- Outlined an option along with the County Manager to fill the position held by the Clerk to the Board who is retiring at the end of June. It was suggested that the Board consider splitting his duties into two positions – 1) Administrative Clerk to do the customary duties and work out of the County Manager’s suite. 2) Writer, or media person, to serve in the Public Relations Department to assist Dorothy with a variety of writing assignments. It was suggested that a small sub-set of the Board be part of reviewing the job applications that are submitted and then present the top candidates to the Board for approval, since the Clerk position is a post that is hired by the Board.


At 3:26 p.m., the Dare County Board of Commissioners adjourned the Special Meeting.



Respectfully submitted,

By:   
Gary Lee Gross, Clerk to the Board

APPROVED:

By:   
Robert Woodard, Chairman  
Dare County Board of Commissioners