



# County of Dare

P.O. Box 1000 | Manteo, NC 27954

---

## MINUTES

### DARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Dare County Administration Building, Manteo, NC

9:00 a.m., April 6, 2020

Commissioners present: Chairman Robert Woodard, Vice Chairman Wally Overman  
Rob Ross, Steve House

Commissioners present  
via remote connection: Jim Tobin, Danny Couch and Ervin Bateman

Commissioners absent: None

Others present: County Manager/Attorney, Robert Outten  
Deputy County Manager/Finance Director, David Clawson  
Master Public Information Officer, Dorothy Hester- (remotely)  
Clerk to the Board, Cheryl C. Anby

A full and complete account of the entire Board of Commissioners meeting is archived on a video that is available for viewing on the Dare County website [www.darenc.com](http://www.darenc.com).

At 9:00 a.m. Chairman Woodard called to order the regularly scheduled meeting with appropriate prior public notice having been given. In light of gathering restrictions, Rev. Tanta Hendricks had submitted a written invocation and Chairman Woodard read it aloud, and then he led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Chairman Woodard explained Vice-Chairman Overman and Commissioners Ross and House were present while Commissioners Bateman, Couch and Tobin were telecommunicating in order to comply with the social distancing requirements. He requested a moment of silence to reflect on the events affecting our country.

#### **ITEM 1 – OPENING REMARKS – CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE**

Following is a brief outline of Chairman Woodard’s opening remarks, which can be viewed in their entirety in a video on the Dare County website:

Chairman Woodard thanked his fellow Control Group members for the tough decisions made to protect our citizens during the outbreak of the Covid-19 virus. The group would continue to meet daily, as the County remains under a State of Emergency with restrictions in place prohibiting access to Dare County for visitors and non-resident property owners. He stressed that staying home and limiting unnecessary travel was the most effective way to control the spread of the virus and to save lives. He referenced the “devastating financial consequences these restrictions” were having, but encouraged everyone to continue to adhere to the guidelines in order to lessen future economic impacts and to increase our chances of thriving as a healthy community.

County Manager Outten advised under the current Rules of Procedure, adopted April 1, 2019, there was a Remote Meeting Rule requiring all the Board Members to be present during a meeting. He asked the Board to waive Rule 3 of remote participation in Board meetings for the remainder of the time the County was under a State of Emergency in order to adhere to social distancing.

**MOTION**

Vice-Chairman Overman motioned to waive Rule 3 of the Rules of Procedure during the Covid-19 pandemic to allow remote participation during Board meetings.

Commissioner House seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

**ITEM 2 – PUBLIC COMMENTS**

At 9:15 a.m. the Manager outlined the procedure for making public comments in Manteo and at the Fessenden Center Annex in Buxton, as well as through emails to [dcbooc@darenc.com](mailto:dcbooc@darenc.com). Following is a summary of citizen remarks provided during the meeting. Commissioners were asked to review the public comments which were made via email and made no additional responses during the meeting.

No one came in person to respond to the invitation to address the Board and there were no in-person comments made in Buxton.

Emails received during the meeting included those from Rachel Haas, Michele Hintz, Lynn Foster, Rodger L. Smith and Cynthia Walzer. Each inquired when they (as non-owner occupied property owners) would be permitted to re-enter Dare County, as under the March 20, 2020 Dare County Declaration of Emergency, non-resident property owners were prohibited. Jay and Susan Henderson, MK Stoney and SeaStar BuxtonOBX each emailed they were experiencing difficulty with the live stream. Jan Mueller presented via email a petition from residents proposing a mandatory evacuation for all non-residents and visitors to leave Dare County immediately.

The County Manager closed Public Comments at 9:19 a.m.

**ITEM 3 – CONSENT AGENDA**

The Manager announced the items as they were visually displayed in the meeting room. He reminded Commissioners to request with a motion to remove any items of concern, which required further discussion, from the Consent Agenda.

**MOTION**

Commissioner House motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:

- 1) Approval of Minutes (03.16.20) **(Att. # 1)**
- 2) Proclamation-Child Abuse Prevention Month **(Att. # 2)**
- 3) Draft Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance and Zoning Amendments **(Att. # 3)**
- 4) Initial Resolution for Refunding of Certain Debt Issuances **(Att. # 4)**
- 5) MedCost Medical Insurance FY 2020-2021
- 6) COVID-19: Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Emergency Paid Sick Leave; Families First Coronavirus Response Act: Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act **(Att. # 5)**
- 7) Amendment to Oakley Collier Contract for the DHHS Project
- 8) DHHS Social Services Division – Energy Programs Budget Amendment

9) Budget Amendment – GHSP Grant

10) Dare County Tourism Board Request Consent Expenditure from Short Term Restricted Fund Line Item 5160

11) Tax Collector's Report

Vice-Chairman Overman and Commissioner Ross seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

#### **ITEM 4 – COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS & MANAGER'S/ATTORNEY'S BUSINESS**

Commissioners and the County Manager frequently make extensive remarks, which can be viewed in their entirety in a video on the Dare County website. Following is a brief summary outline of the items mentioned by Commissioners during this segment:

##### Commissioner Ross

- He noted in addition to the current health risks, the combined physiological, social and economic consequences were considerably severe. He stressed the importance of remaining supportive and cooperative and to maintain confidence and optimism, as we will prevail against this virus.
- On behalf of the Board he expressed gratitude and appreciation for Chairman Woodard and Manager Outten's many hours of dedication and work thus far since the March 16, 2020 emergency declaration.

##### Vice Chairman Overman

- He quoted, "we live in interesting times". He added no curse could be worse than what we are experiencing now. Everyone is suffering on some level and virtually every email received by the Board has spoken to the pain realized by both full-time, part-time citizens and visitors.
- The Control Group has acted to protect this County in the best interest of everyone.
- To quote General Sherman "war is hell" and "the crueller it is, the sooner it will be over". Vice-Chairman noted we were at the precipice of a two-week period and the social distancing guidelines must be followed to save lives.
- Mitigation would be the key to suppressing the effects of the virus and it would be critical for adherence to the guidelines. He reminded everyone of the words of Dr. Anthony Fauci, "mitigation, mitigation, mitigation" in order to save lives. Everyone should do what they could, as there would be tough times ahead. He encouraged everyone to stay safe and stay calm.

##### Commissioner House

- He thanked County staff for their diligent work, but reach out with special thanks to the retail workers, medical staff and first responders.
- He reported a brief discussion with the Marine Fisheries Commissioner and Governor to relax some of the regulations for commercial fishing with no results at this time. In order to aid our economy, he urged citizens to visit their local fish houses, as there was an abundance of fresh seafood available.
- In response to those asking why the State of Emergency actions were implemented, he referenced the 1918 flu pandemic, when one third of the world population became infected. He added we could learn from that historic period when there were no

antibiotics and the use of quarantines, good hygiene, disinfectants, limitation of public gatherings and limitation of unnecessary travel between cities and states became useful.

- He thanked the good citizens of Dare County who had donated time and money to local non-profit agencies to help our underprivileged with food. He also thanked the school system, as they were providing the same much needed relief.
- He closed with a quote, "Do not let your fears drive your decisions. Let your decisions drive your fears."

#### Commissioner Bateman

- He thanked the Manager and the Commissioners for all of their hard work during this time, as well as the many first responders and healthcare workers. He has also been communicating to the public what Dare County is doing during this time.
- The industry which he proudly represents, the restaurant industry, is taking a big hit. One problem with the States and Federal government programs was the inability of people getting online to get unemployment benefits because the system was overloaded. We have to be persistent and help each other.

(Clerk's note: A portion of Commissioner Bateman's comments could not be recorded, as there were difficulties with his transmission.)

#### Commissioner Couch

- He expressed his gratitude for the social service staff, which is about thirty, and they have been doing a great job attending to the needs of our elderly and the retiree base on Hatteras Island. While he is staying at home, he sees those continuing their work to staff the EOC call center and listening to the concerns of our non-resident property owners. He looks forward to having them back in our lives and our community. This time will pass and he thanked everyone doing their part. He will continue to take calls from his great friends, many of whom are non-residents.

#### Commissioner Tobin

- Thanked and echoed all of the comments presented by Chairman Woodard. He added the Manager, Dr. Davies and her staff, Sheriff Doughtie and his deputies and countless others are all doing a great job.
- He wanted to highlight the efforts of the Crowwait Custom Composite employees, who had shut down their boat shop and had been manufacturing health supplies.
- He closed with noting that although some people will be infected with this virus, everyone will be affected. He urged everyone to practice the Stay at Home policy.

#### **MANAGER'S/ATTORNEY'S BUSINESS - (Att. # 6)**

Mr. Outten remarked the April 20, 2020 Board meeting, currently scheduled to take place in Buxton, would need to be held in Manteo.

#### **MOTION**

Commissioner House motioned to hold the April 20, 2020 Dare County Board meeting at Manteo Administration building.

Commissioner Ross seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

County Manager noted the County had been voluntarily not disconnecting water service to those unable to make their payments. The Governor had recently amended the guidelines and the County needed to amend their ordinance to follow the Governor's Order and continue with waiving disconnection of services at this time.

**MOTION**

Vice Chairman Overman motioned to amend the County ordinance and continue with the waiver of disconnection of water services and comply with Governor's Order during the Covid-19 situation.

Commissioner House seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

Mr. Outten reported County transportation had been limited, but the County had continued providing transportation for necessary medical appointments and waiving the fees.

**MOTION**

Commissioner House motioned to allow the waiver of fees for County transportation services during the Covid-19 situation.

Vice-Chairman Overman seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

The Manager reported the outline of temporary procedures in place for County employees to maintain social distancing and allow County services to continue. Some were approved to work from home; others had flex work schedules or rotation of schedules and other employees were available to assist in other departments. There were employees cross training to drive ambulances. If employees are sent home to work, no leave would be taken, if they are sent home due to Covid-19 related symptoms the federal rules would apply. If an employee was home for reasons other than Covid-19 related, the normal County leave policy would be utilized. He requested authority to adjust leave policies as needed.

**MOTION**

Commissioner House motioned to approve the temporary procedures put in place by the County Manager to maintain social distancing while allowing County services to continue.

Vice-Chairman Overman seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

County Manager reminded a Public Hearing would be needed in order to have the 2019 amendments and additions to the County Ordinances codified for publication. The Planning Director, Donna Creef, would notice the Public Hearing for the first May meeting.

**MOTION**

Commissioner House motioned to have the Public Hearing in May for new ordinances to be codified.

Commissioner Ross seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

Mr. Outten explained he had received a request to provide a letter of recognition for the design of the Basnight Bridge to the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials. Commissioner Ross questioned whether the letter's reference to dredging had been addressed and the Manager advised he would be reaching out to Commissioner Tobin before finalizing the letter.

**MOTION**

Vice Chairman Overman motioned to approve the County Manager to sign the letter of the bridge design recognition to the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials.

Commissioner Ross seconded the motion

VOTE: AYES unanimous

Mr. Outten closed his comments by advising the County was still running and providing services. Staff had cut any discretionary spending and hiring to be in good shape for the remainder of the year. Staff meetings were being held remotely. The work on the 2020/21 budget continued with expectations to begin with a no growth or flat budget. He explained conversations continued each day with the Chairman, Dr. Sheila Davies, Dorothy Hester, Drew Pearson, Sheriff and other support staff in each department to discuss any adjustments to be made while the County continued its services to the community.

Dave Clawson announced the results of the debt refinancing were going well and there would be a public hearing on April 20, 2020 to move to approve. The anticipated closing date was May 13, 2020.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Chairman Woodard asked for a motion to adjourn.

**MOTION**

Commissioner House motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Vice Chairman Overman seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

At 9:46 a.m., the Board of Commissioners adjourned until 5:00 p.m., April 20, 2020.



APPROVED:

Respectfully submitted,

By: *Cheryl C. Anby*  
Cheryl C. Anby, Clerk to the Board

By: *Robert Woodard, Sr.*  
Robert Woodard, Sr., Chairman  
Dare County Board of Commissioners

Note: Copies of attachments (Att.), proclamation, contracts, and supporting material considered by the Board of Commissioners at this meeting are on file in the office of the Clerk to the Board.