



County of Dare

P.O. Box 1000 | Manteo, NC 27954

MINUTES

DARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Dare County Administration Building, Manteo, NC

5:00 p.m., September 21, 2020

Commissioners present: Chairman Robert Woodard, Vice Chairman Wally Overman
Steve House, Jim Tobin, and Ervin Bateman
Commissioner Danny Couch attending remotely

Commissioners absent: Rob Ross

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

At 5:03 p.m. Chairman Woodard called to order the regularly scheduled meeting with appropriate prior public notice having been given. He presented an invocation prepared by Rev. David Feyrer, of All Saints Episcopal Church, and then led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

ITEM 1 – OPENING REMARKS – CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE

Following is a brief outline of the items mentioned by Chairman Woodard during his opening remarks, which can be viewed in their entirety in a video on the Dare County website:

- He noted Commissioner Couch would be attending tonight’s meeting via a remote connection due to Hwy 12 closure. Commissioner Ross would not be in attendance.
- Covid-19 was still being dealt with locally and nationally. While Dare had seen an encouraging lower number of cases in the past few weeks, he warned that could change quickly. Everyone should continue to follow the 3 W’s to reduce any possible spread.
- An on-line survey had been released to seek information from employers for suitable housing options for employees. The County had engaged the services of the Development Finance Initiative (DFI) from the NC School of Government to help identify opportunities for new development. The Dare website contained a link to the survey at darenc.com/employerhousingsurvey.
- The COA project was moving forward with the old school coming down in a few weeks. The building holds many memories for Dare residents. The long history of providing education at this site would continue and the new campus would bring new opportunities for those pursuing an associate’s degree or technical trade skills.

- Warned everyone to continue to pay attention to updates of weather with this very active hurricane season. He noted even storms that stay off shore can bring extreme conditions with flash flooding and ocean overwash. Everyone should have a plan ready.
- Reported the lawsuit brought against Dare County by the Blackburns had been dismissed by the US District Court on September 15.
- Noted the Nation mourns with half-staff flags with the loss of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Gidsburg. She dedicated her life to public service and advocacy for social justice with her twenty-seven years of service in the Supreme Court.
- Highway NC12 was still closed due to overwash and severe coastal dune loss. NCDOT, working diligently, was hopeful for reopening sometime tomorrow. As a result, trash collection had been rescheduled for Rodanthe, Avon, Salvo and Waves due to road conditions.

ITEM 2 – PUBLIC COMMENTS

At 5:17 p.m. the Manager outlined the procedure for making public comments via email to the Board. No one responded to the invitation to address the Board and the Manager closed Public Comments at 5:18 p.m.

ITEM 3 – CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR EXCELLENCE IN FINANCIAL REPORTING

Chairman Woodard introduced this item. He explained for twenty-nine consecutive years, Dare County has received the Certificate of Excellence in their Financial Reporting by the Government Finance Officers Association of the US and Canada and added David Clawson had been the finance director for every award year. As the person primarily responsible for preparing the report, Sally DeFosse, Assistant Finance Director, accepted the award.

ITEM 4 – RESOLUTION OPPOSING OFFSHORE DRILLING AND SEISMIC TESTING – (Att. #1)

Chairman Woodard had asked the Board to consider another resolution to reaffirm opposition to offshore drilling and testing, and to ask the President to extend the moratorium to North Carolina, as he had for Georgia, Florida and South Carolina. He was pleased to announce the resolution would not be necessary as he had received a call from U.S. Senator Thom Tillis that North Carolina would be included under the moratorium which prohibited offshore development between July 1 2022 and June 30, 2032. Chairman Woodard thanked the President for listening to North Carolinians and to those on the coast.

ITEM 5 – DARE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES – A PROCLAMATION “SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH” (Att. #2)

In order to promote awareness and reduce the stigma associated with suicide, the Dare County Department of Health and Human Services presented the Board with a resolution to proclaim September 2020 as “Suicide Prevention Awareness Month”.

MOTION

Commissioner House motioned to adopt the proclamation.

Commissioner Bateman seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

ITEM 6 – UPDATE TO COUNTY TRAVEL POLICY

Mr. Clawson introduced a revised Dare County Travel Policy. The existing policy had not been updated since 2014 and significant changes were outlined in the summary. Airline travel had changed and other scenarios had not been addressed in the old policy. Some revisions addressed were the types of fares booked, refundable versus non-refundable, how many checked bags would be paid for; travel cancellations and the deduction of hotel-provided meals from per diem. Clarification for the point of departure for travel was also addressed for mileage claims for all boards and committees. The updated policies had been reviewed by the Finance Department, Human Resources and the County Manager.

Commissioner Tobin offered it should be considered to add some specifics regarding charter air travel. If someone flew on a charter aircraft, the policy should address payment for the seat should be at the same rate as a non-refundable seat, as on a commercial aircraft. The Board unanimously agreed to add the charter flight scenario to the revised travel policy. Mr. Clawson indicated the updated policy would go in affect immediately.

MOTION

Vice-Chairman Overman motioned to adopt the updated County Travel Policy, as presented, with the addition of the charter aircraft specifics.

Commissioner Tobin seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

ITEM 7 – CHANGE TO NC C-19 RELIEF FUND PLAN AND AMENDMENT TO GRANT PROJECT ORDINANCE (Att. #3)

Mr. Clawson advised of the update on FEMA approved reimbursement for PPE, cleaning and other Covid-19 health compliance costs to be applied to only first responders and their facilities effective September 15, 2020. Non-eligible costs currently totaled \$71,063. Schools were also affected by the change. Dare County schools had been slated to purchase check stations for each school at a total sum of \$86,937, previously allowed under FEMA reimbursement guidelines. Amendments to the budget and grant ordinance were presented which reduced the health department, salaries and fringes by \$158,000, increased by \$71,063 for the County's PPE costs and further increased \$86,937 for the schools. Vice Chairman Overman commented the check stations could realize continued use past Covid-19 concerns and may prove helpful in the regular flu seasons that follow.

MOTION

Commissioner Tobin motioned to authorize the NC C-19 Relief Fund Plan Version 3; adopt the amendment to the grant project ordinance; and authorize the County Manager to execute an interlocal grant agreement with the Dare County Schools.

Vice-Chairman Overman seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

ITEM 8 – REQUEST TO SELL 48944 NC HIGHWAY 12, PARCEL 026511000 – BUXTON HARBOR

Mr. Outten advised an offer had been received by the agent for C. Daniel Burrus for the purchase of 28,640 square feet of the subject parcel, as noted on an exhibit. The land area was very small and over years the boundaries were unclear. The County had spent time trying to utilize the property but found it too small for development. Dare County's appraiser had reviewed the appraisal provided and agreed it was an appropriate value. If the Board agreed to sell the parcel, the property would have to be declared surplus with the adoption of a resolution pursuant to General Statute 160A-269. The County Manager advised the

proposed sale did not include the parcel adjoining the road. Commissioner Tobin commented the parcel currently reflected a tax record value of \$318,400, with a miscellaneous value of \$84,000, assumedly for a bulkhead. In his opinion, the property was worth more than \$20,000 and it was a low offer. The County Manager explained the majority of the value was assigned to the property on the road. He reaffirmed the County appraiser's assessment of the parcel considered for sale closely matched what had been submitted by the offeror's appraiser. He added the bulkhead was in disrepair. Commissioner Tobin asked if it was a spoil site and whether it would be needed in the future. The County Manager indicated it had been created as a spoil site but with limited public use, it was not an area to be dredged unless the Board considered doing so at a later time. Commissioner Couch had received calls expressing concern over selling the parcel advocated the sale.

MOTION

Commissioner Bateman motioned to authorize the sale of the parcel, approve the offer and approve adoption of the resolution declaring the parcel as surplus property.

Vice-Chairman Overman seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

ITEM 9 – CONSENT AGENDA

The Manager announced the items as they were visually displayed in the meeting room.

MOTION

Commissioner House motioned to approve the Consent Agenda:

- 1) Approval of Minutes (09.08.20) **(Att. #4)**
- 2) 2020 Update – Dare County Repetitive Loss Area Analysis
- 3) Tax Collector's Report
- 4) Reimbursement Resolution for Series 2020B LOBs for Manteo High School Roof Project

Commissioner Tobin seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

ITEM 10 – BOARD APPOINTMENTS

- 1) Health and Human Services Board

MOTION

Vice-Chairman Overman motioned to reappoint Janine Sewell to fill the current vacancy.

Seconded by Commissioner Bateman

VOTE: AYES unanimous

ITEM 11 – COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS & MANAGER'S/ATTORNEY'S BUSINESS

The following is a brief summary outline of the items mentioned by Commissioners:

Chairman Woodard

- He explained the North Carolina Ferry Division would be submitting an application to the Federal Land Access Program (FLAP). A letter had been prepared to bolster support from Dare County for their petition for funding.

MOTION

Commissioner Tobin motioned to provide a letter of support for NC Ferry Division's application to FLAP.

Vice-Chairman Overman seconded the motion

VOTE: AYES unanimous

- The Chairman presented a resolution to be considered by the Board regarding continued support of terminal groins and jetties for Oregon Inlet. Congressman Greg Murphy had reached out to inquire if Dare County would be interested in his pursuit of legislation aiming to move forward with these types of projects.

MOTION – Att. #5

Commissioner House motioned to adopt the resolution for supporting terminal groins and jetties

Commissioner Tobin seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

The National Association of County Commissioners (NACCO) annually requested each county to provide their legislative goals. Several of our smaller neighboring counties had asked that we continue to seek legislation, funding and other efforts to expand digital infrastructure and broadband capabilities to the unserved and underserved areas of the state. This would provide better telemedicine, distance learning, promote economic development and help with social isolation.

MOTION

Commissioner House motioned that Dare County adopt to continue to seek legislation, funding and other efforts to expand digital infrastructure and broadband capabilities to surrounding counties as one of our legislative goals.

Commissioner Tobin seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

Commissioner Couch

- He thanked the Chairman for his comments on the recent passing of Ruth Bader Ginsburg and commented on her relationship with Justice Antonin Scalia. Their unlikely friendship survived their polar opposite views on many issues. He respected her and encouraged others to follow her example.
- He reported on Hatteras Island's weather conditions, which had prevented his live attendance to the meeting. Although there was still a lot of water to deal with, it had begun to dissipate. Some visitors were surprised yet many were enjoying the experience.

Commissioner Bateman

- He asked about an update on the discussion regarding NCDOT implementing traffic quieting devices such as rumble strips or poles off of the Basnight Bridge into Manns Harbor. Similarly something would need to be considered once the Jug Handle Bridge was completed to insure safety of those crossing. The County Attorney advised he would recommunicate the concerns to Sterling Baker and provide an update.
- He inquired as to the status of the passenger ferry and the County Attorney responded he would also look into an update from NCDOT.
- Agreed with the continued support of expanding broadband coverage to neighboring counties, especially with the increased reliance on the internet for treatment of mental health, AA Zoom meetings and other sources to deal with depression.

Vice-Chairman Overman – advised he had nothing further to report.

Commissioner House

- He offered his condolences to the Ginsburg family and added she fought as a warrior against her cancer over the years and had been a strong force in the Supreme Court.
- The flounder season began September 15 and would close October 6, 2020. The season had already been shortened by five days due to rough water and winds. He would be asking Director Murphy if there would be a possibility to have an extension because of the financial hardships caused by the weather.
- There would be a Working Watermen Commission meeting soon to discuss other fishing issues and he would provide an update.
- He reported on the new initiative called Always NC Fresh. The website funded by the North Carolina Commercial Fishing Resource Fund was working to increase awareness of commercial fishing and fisherman. He urged everyone to take a look at the site, as it would also provide faces and commentary from area fisherman.
- Reported on the establishment of the International Day of Peace by the United Nations on September 21, 1981 and noted September 22, 2020 was recognized as National Voter Registration Day.

Commissioner Tobin

- Oregon Inlet Task Force had met with good reports. The Currituck had been here and was able to dredge several days. However, Currituck has gone north to the shipyard and would be out of service until 2022 for a total rebuild. The Merritt should be back in Oregon Inlet as long as no other emergencies occur. The Merdin had been out of service for some time and should be back on the third week of October.
- He commended Dave Clawson, Sally DeFosse and the entire staff in finance, stating what they accomplish was “second to none”.
- In response to Chairman Woodard, he explained there would be a laying of the keel for the new dredge and he would follow up with more information once construction progresses.

MANAGER’S/ATTORNEY’S BUSINESS

County Manager Outten had nothing additional to report. He commended Dave Clawson, Sally DeFosse and the finance department; not only on their recent financial reporting award but for the good work they did every day for the County.

Dave Clawson advised the auditors were here this week.

Dorothy Hester reported on the housing survey, which had received over 248 responses so far. She noted there were only nine days left in the final push for completion of the 2020 Census and Dare County’s most recent response rates had been shown to be 83%, which was the expected average.

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

MOTION

Commissioner House motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Tobin seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

At 6:41 p.m., the Board of Commissioners adjourned until 9:00 a.m., October 5, 2020.



Respectfully submitted,

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

APPROVED:

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

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