



County of Dare

P.O. Box 1000 | Manteo, NC 27954

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.

954 Marshall C. Collins Drive, Manteo, NC 27954 (Room 168)

9:00 a.m., March 24, 2021

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

Commissioners absent: None

Others present: County Manager/Attorney, Robert Outten
Deputy County Mgr./Finance Director, David Clawson
Assistant Finance Director, Sally DeFosse
Public Information Officer, Dorothy Hester
Clerk to the Board, Cheryl C. Anby

ITEM 1 – CONVENE, PRAYER, PLEDGE & WELCOME

At 8:57 a.m. Chairman Woodard called the meeting to order with appropriate prior public notice having been given. Commissioner Couch offered prayer and Chairman Woodard led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

ITEM 2 – DISCUSSION ITEMS

County Manager Outten presented the following items for discussion and explained the Finance Department needed to hear more from the Board about each one.

EMS Facilities - - -

The County Manager led the Board in a discussion regarding the EMS facilities assessment. This item was discussed at last year's workshop last year and since there had been a few changes. There were two stations which needed repair with station 1 a priority and second would be the Kitty Hawk facility. The Rodanthe station was also small and inadequate. Capt. Collins would help prioritize the projects. It was agreed the building which houses the helicopter crew was in a deteriorated state. It was the consensus of the Board to move the rebuild of Rodanthe station up in the CIP to 2022 and to move everything up in sequence. As to the Kill Devil Hills project, Mr. Outten stated it would be necessary to work through a MOU with the town so the new building could be built on the two lots slated for the project.

Manteo Youth Center Facility - - -

The Manteo Youth Center, operated by Dare County staff has an afterschool program for anyone, but especially underprivileged. The current facility is has a capacity of forty and could easily have sixty or more if they had a larger space. One option would be to partner with the Lion's Club and add on to the building. As it is a non-conforming structure, it would be costly to add on to the club. The Board agreed to discuss other options in a Closed Session. It was the consensus to begin working this into the CIP.

Substance Abuse Funding - - -

Commissioner Bateman advised the site plan for expansion of the Outer Banks Dare Challenge was 90% complete. He read a letter dated March 23, 2021 into the record (copy attached to these notes) which presented an updated review of the current program and their expansion. It was the goal of the project to increase productivity and for the participants to become self-sufficient through education and expanding their work throughout the community. After some discussion, Mr. Outten advised there was \$125,000 budgeted for Recovery Court. It was suggested to add \$200,000 to the Substance Abuse Fund which would bring the total to \$325k. It was the consensus of the Board to set aside \$200,000 as a one-time charitable donation to Dare Challenge.

Flex Staff Scheduling Post COVID-19 - - -

Mr. Outten advised of the flex scheduling of staff during COVID had been successful as a good work/life balance. He discussed how to ease employees back into offices while affording those departments who could continue with a flex schedule program. He explained there would be policies and monitoring in place. Chairman Woodard asked whether there were statistics on productivity with flex scheduling. The Board reviewed factors of accountability, the need for a regimented schedule and the possible animosity amongst staff who could not participate in a flex schedule due to the type of service they provided. A proposal would be reviewed by the Board after further inquiry with how other counties were handling flex scheduling and Human Resources would provide input.

Compression in Salary Grades - - -

Mr. Outten said a salary study had been done several years ago and now the market was changing again. The County did not have a good way to move people through the current grade system. Chairman Woodard said a yearly COLA was a good tool to help with compression. Mr. Outten proposed to look at a process that moved staff through the salary grade based on time employed coupled with merit pay. Mr. Outten would talk with Finance and Human Resources to discuss further. The last salary study was done in 2016.

401K for Staff - - -

The 401k plan had been cut in 2007 and there had been some discussion to reintroduce the benefit. Currently employees have a state retirement plan. Chairman Woodard stated department heads had commented before they would rather have a merit raise than 401k. We currently have a 401k but the county does not put anything in it. Commissioner Tobin said it would be important to see what the compression salary comes back at first and Commissioner Bateman agreed. After further dialog, Mr. Outten offered it would be left on the list to be considered.

The Board took a recess from 10:44 a.m. – 10:58 a.m.

Pilots - - -

The County Manager addressed the need to create a test pilot stipend. The test pilot was needed to comply with FAA regulations to “test fly” every pilot every two years in addition to their annually recurring training and certifications. The Board authorized the stipend.

Stormwater Issues - - -

Mr. Outten indicated the County had assisted specific areas with stormwater issues in a few instances. There were stormwater issues throughout Dare. Brent Johnson had received a grant in the amount of \$150,000 with a \$50,000 cost share by the county from FEMA. He asked the group if they wanted to enhance that into a stormwater plan in order to begin projects to address the issue. Once a plan identified the problem areas, it could be determined how the community could financially manage resolutions. Consensus of the Board given to get the study done and a decision would be made later.

On the same topic, Chairman Woodard updated the Board on his inquiry with a property owner, whose wooded lot was the only lot without a berm in a neighborhood experiencing stormwater issues on a regular basis. The Board discussed and agreed to provide the one time funds for the cost of materials only for berm of approximately \$1,500.

Countywide Broadband Access - - -

Vice-Chairman Overman had been in contact with CenturyLink (now known as Lumens) and with Charter. He was investigating having engineers providing an estimate to extend Charter from Manns Harbor to Stumpy Point and East Lake. It was discussed there were federal funds coming available that might be used for broadband. The Board agreed to wait for a follow-up on the matter with nothing budgeted at this time.

Public Works Facilities - - -

Mr. Outten explained there was \$50,000 in next year for study and \$21 million in 2025. The facilities have various needs to be assessed. The fuel parking lot had been paved but was run down. The Buxton transfer station area needs to be rearranged and reworked. The Board agreed to move the \$21 million funds up as far as possible for future facility projects.

Library Upgrades - - -

Checklist items had been done such as paint and carpet with the exception of ceiling lighting estimated at \$35-40,000. It was agreed to be placed as an item under Public Works.

Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum - - -

Commissioner Couch sought funding for the museum. \$4.5 million was needed to finish exhibits. The group discussed whether any support may be realized by state representatives. He explained the concern about having to relinquish the museum to NOAA which would give the community very little control in exhibits. The project began in 1984 and Commissioner Couch wanted the Board to make a commitment to an amount in order get the State to contribute the remainder. It was suggested to have the museum group meet and consider what could be done locally while Chairman Woodard and Commissioner Bateman met with the Tourism Board.

Roanoke Island Historic Assoc. Request - - -

Chairman Woodard introduced this item. As RIHA goes into their 83rd season, Kevin Bradley, Chairman had sent out an email asking for support from the County for their new production of The Lost Colony historical drama. They needed new seating at an estimated cost of \$600,000. The group discussed and agreed to the addition of a one-time \$100,000.00 contribution to the budget for RIHA.

Sedimentation Management/Placement - - -

Commissioner Tobin reminded the group it was clear after Ken Willson's presentation that finding places to put spoils was becoming challenging. It would be important for the Board to fund the recommendations since it was a lengthy process to get through all of the regulations. The shallow layer (thin layer placement in marshes) that actually brings the marsh up had never been done in the state. He asked the Board to support the presentation and the studies that would be done in the future.

C & D Landfill Site - - -

Mr. Outten requested some policy direction. The operational cost of the site was beginning to exceed tipping fees. The possibility of opening the landfill to other counties was discussed along with the fact that the site had a finite capacity with an estimated fifty years of use. After some discussion, it was with unanimous consensus that the Board authorized the Manager to open up the landfill to both Tyrell and Hyde Counties without a tipping fee increase. It was estimated this could generate a \$200,000 surplus and could reduce the site's capacity by approximately five years.

Board provided authority to change tipping fee to cover costs if monitoring finds it necessary.

County Manager brought to the Board's attention several bills.

H344 provided for an impact fee recalculation for utilities which will decrease revenue. Mr. Outten received Board consensus to contact the lobbyist. S330 is a billboard law which voids any local government input in billboard placement on the DOT right of way. It was consensus to not involve lobbyist on that item.

COVID19 - - -

Commissioner Ross commented he received Dr. Davies' weekly updates. He requested the Health Department continue to report in detail regarding statistics of the number of citizens with the virus.

COMMISSIONER'S ITEMS

Commissioner House

- Reported a part of the Wright brothers' flyer was sent to Mars.

Commissioner Bateman

- With the decrease of the J1 students in restaurants, he had been asked for the County to fund a bus to bring them in from Currituck. The Board discussed without action.

Commissioner Couch

- He recommended an eye be kept on the old waterfall park for a purchasing opportunity, as it was a huge piece of elevated property.

Commissioner Tobin

- Stated as a “week in history” it was notable to remember Alexander Graham Bell received his first phone call.

Commissioner Rob

- Nothing additional to discuss.

Vice-Chairman Overman

- Nothing additional to discuss

Commissioner Woodard

- Katherine Fagan had asked for a conversation regarding a hotel that she would like to see used for essential housing. He announced the Duke of Dare Motel had been sold.
- Commented the progress on essential housing was frustrating thus far.

ITEM 3 – CLOSED SESSION

County Manager Outten requested a Closed Session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the County in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege and to approve the minutes of the last Closed Session.

MOTION

Vice-Chairman Overman motioned to go into Closed Session.

Commissioner Bateman seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

The Board recessed into Closed Session at 1:59 p.m. and returned at 2:18 p.m.

Mr. Outten reported that during the Closed Session the Board had discussion with the County Attorney regarding a real estate matter and took no action.

MOTION

Vice-Chairman Overman motioned to adjourn.

Commissioner Tobin seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

At 2:19 p.m., the Dare County Board of Commissioners adjourned the Special Meeting.



APPROVED:

Respectfully submitted,

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

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