



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., May 17, 2021

Commissioners present: Chairman Robert Woodard, Sr., Vice-Chairman Wally Overman
Rob Ross (attended via telephonic connection), Steve House, 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
Cheryl C. Anby, Clerk to the Board

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 5:06 p.m. Chairman Woodard called to order the regularly scheduled meeting with appropriate prior public notice having been given. He invited Rev. David Feyrer to share an invocation, and then he 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:

- Highlighted the recent accomplishments of First Flight High School golfer Katherine Schuster, who had won her fourth consecutive 1A/2A Women’s Golf Championship in Pinehurst. She would be attending Clemson University in the fall.
- Announced DHHS is ready to begin providing residents with a timeline for vaccinating children ages 12-15.
- Larry Ogden received the NC Governors Medallion Award, which is the highest volunteer honor to be received in the state. Mr. Ogden was described as having a “can do attitude” and “untiring commitment” to his community.

ITEM 2 – PUBLIC COMMENTS

At 5:12 p.m. the Manager outlined the procedure for making public comments in Manteo and via the video link to the Fessenden Center Annex in Buxton. Following is a summary of all citizen remarks, which can be viewed in their entirety in a video on the County website: No comments were made from Buxton. The following comments were made in Manteo.

1. Lillias Morrison, as representative of the Northern Dare Library Committee, presented an update and request for the Board's consideration for a branch library for the northern part of the county. She assured there remained a strong interest and need for a northern library.

The County Manager closed Public Comments at 5:10 p.m.

ITEM 3 – REPORT FROM THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Superintendent Dave Hallac stated he was proud to be part of the County and commended its leadership in all departments. The national parks of eastern North Carolina included Wright Brothers Memorial, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, Cape Hatteras National Seashore and Cape Lookout National Seashore. The two seashore parks make up over 40% of the North Carolina coast line. He reported there were over 3.07 million visitors last year and 117,000 overnight campers to the four campgrounds. There were 47,794 off road permits issued. The parks are staffed with 80 regular staff, 80 seasonal staff and thousands of volunteers. Along with the services and activities, he reported over 270 tons of trash had been removed from the collective parks. Wright Brothers experienced low attendance records in 2020. Cape Hatteras National Seashore had the highest visits in 2020 and was noted as the twenty-second busiest park last year. A sediment management framework was now complete, which would aid in the ability to issue permits as needed for various county projects. An overview of several projects underway this year included: Ocracoke light station preservation with consideration to possibly moving the station, maintain pristine beaches while monitoring 228 sea turtle nests, Cape Hatteras lighthouse revitalization, multi-use paths to be added at Wright Brothers Memorial and camping modernizations. The Bonner Bridge fishing pier was almost complete and would be free and opened twenty-four hours a day while being managed by the Park Service with NCDOT. He concluded with explaining over the next three years they would continue focusing on Hurricane Dorian recovery, revitalizing the Cape Hatteras lighthouse area while always adapting to a changing coast.

ITEM 4 – REPORT ON JENNETTE'S PIER

Michael P. Remige, Director of Jennette's Pier, provided an update on the pier's activities and recognized the tenth anniversary its rebuild. The pier had been there for eighty-two years and he thanked the County for their support. They had realized 1.75 million visitors since the reopening with 60,000 students attending field trips and 2,500 summer campers. The pier had been the location of over 400 weddings. Mr. Remige estimated the pier had generated \$53 million dollars of economic output, \$20 million in rental event spending and an estimated \$3 million in state and local tax revenue. He explained there were many new programs and upgrades to the pier underway. The Waves to Water Prize program would encourage new concepts to use the movement of water to desalinate seawater. In a new partnership with the Coastal Studies Institute, Jennette's Pier was chosen to be part of Atlantic Marine Energy Center, one of four national marine energy test centers. With full accreditation of the pier, significant goals were finally being achieved that were set in motion twenty years ago.

ITEM 5 – CHAPTER 160D AMENDMENTS TO DARE COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES

(Att. #1) Mr. Outten explained legislature had completed a rewrite of Chapter 160D and the County had been in the process of rewriting local ordinances to comply. Any ordinance amendments would have to be in place by July or the state's statutes would become Dare's

ordinances. Donna Creef had worked diligently to complete the seventy-eight page draft changes. In order to move forward, a public hearing was required. After completion of the public hearing, Donna Creef, would take the Board through the changes and answer any questions or concerns.

MOTION

Commissioner Tobin motioned to schedule a Public Hearing on the draft Chapter 160D amendments to the Dare County Code of Ordinances for June 21, 2021 at 5:00 pm. Commissioner House seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

ITEM 6– 2021-22 HATTERAS INLET MAINTENANCE & PERMIT MODIFICATION (Att.# 2)

County Manager Outten explained the technical work on the project had been completed. A grant would pay for part of the maintenance project and required the Board's approval for submission to DEQ in order to continue maintenance on the connector channel in 2021/22, as well as modify the existing dredging permit to allow the Ms. Katie to dredge South Ferry.

MOTION

Commissioner House motioned to approve submission to DEQ, approve resolution for the grant submission and approve County Manager to execute contract with CPE and grant when approved by DEQ after July 1, 2021.

Commissioner Bateman seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

ITEM 7 – REQUEST TO MODIFY HATTERAS/ROLLINSON CHANNEL FEDERAL AUTHORIZATION TO INCLUDE THE HATTERAS BAR (Att. #3)

Mr. Outten also presented this item to the Board requesting that Dare County, as a local sponsor, request a change to federal authorizations for the Hatteras/Rollinson Channel to include the Hatteras Bar.

MOTION

Vice-Chairman Overman motioned to approve staff to submit a request under Section 7001 of the 2014 Water Resources Reform and Development Act adding the Hatteras Bar to the Hatteras/Rollinson Federal Authorization.

Commissioner Tobin seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

Commissioner Tobin added this had been a problem for a long time and suggested securing support from the Coast Guard since the area was an outlet and inlet for rescue vessels.

ITEM 8 – OLD SWIMMING HOLE

The County Manager presented a five-year contract for lifeguard services at the "ole swimming hole" in Manteo. He advised there would be a change reducing it to a one year contract while maintaining an attendance count this year. There was a possibility of closing the swimming hole due to reduced use and perhaps locate another site for swimming.

MOTION

Commissioner House motioned to approve the contract with the County Manager changes and authorize him to sign the final contract.

Commissioner Bateman seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

ITEM 9 – BUDGET AMENDMENT FOR MANAGER’S ONE-TIME USE LIST (Att. #4)

Mr. Outten explained the budget amendment before the Board reflected the use of \$5,110,499 from the General Fund unassigned fund balance for non-recurring items approved by the Board at the May 3, 2021 budget workshop. The amount was \$5,000 more than at the budget workshop, as the new GIS equipment had been omitted by mistake.

MOTION

Commissioner House motioned to approve the Budget Amendment for Manager’s One-time Use per the list provided.

Commissioners Tobin and Ross seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

ITEM 10 – PRESENTATION OF MANAGER’S FY2022 RECOMMENDED BUDGET

Mr. Outten presented the FY2022 Manager’s recommended budget that included a General Fund of \$177,886,587 with the General Fund at \$112,706,798 of that amount. The budget was balanced and in compliance with the NC Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act and was aligned with the direction given by the Board. The Board had provided several focus areas which included: long term financial planning, economic development, which included beach nourishment and affordable housing efforts, education, human resources, maintaining levels of services and a minimum unassigned fund balance in the General Fund of 21% of fund #10 revenues. The recommended budget did not include an increase in property taxes and Dare County remained with the state’s fifth lowest rate. The negative effects of COVID on the 2021 adopted budget had been short lived in Dare County with higher than normal tourism levels beginning in June 2020 and continuing to date. The revenue and expense factors of 2019 were being used for preparation of the recommended budget. Departmental and outside agency budget requests had exceeded projected revenues which had created a General Fund budget deficit of \$3,604,091 and he outlined the driving factors. Revenue growth reduced the deficit and they were able to bridge the gap. The health plan also had no projected increase. Any changes would be brought to the Board at the next meeting. He explained the 2022 General Fund expenditure increases included more employee training, network security, cybersecurity, a merit pool of \$549,068 and a 2% COLA. The Capital Investment Fund is restored in the 2022 budget to \$10,425,000 and the model includes plans for roof, heating and air conditioning replacements along with equipment replacement and major maintenance to the MedFlight helicopter. Mr. Outten concluded with thanks to the Board for guidance and direction. He also thanked the finance department and department heads. Commissioner Tobin inquired as to funding for dredging efforts and Mr. Clawson explained it was being maintained at the same as in past budgets. Commissioner Ross said the budget presentation reaffirmed Dare was following and spending on the priorities of public safety, education, clean water, waterways, beach nourishment and health and human services.

MOTION

Commissioner House motioned to schedule a Public Hearing on the recommended FY2022 budget for June 7, 2021 and instructed the Clerk to publish the notice.

Commissioner Bateman seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

ITEM 11 – CONSENT AGENDA

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

MOTION

Commissioner Bateman motioned to approve the Consent Agenda:

- 1) Approval of Minutes (05.03.21) Approval of Minutes Budget Retreat (05.03.21)
(Att. #5 and #6)
- 2) Tax Collector's Report

Commissioner House seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

ITEM 12 – BOARD APPOINTMENTS

1) Hatteras Community Center

Vice-Chairman Overman motioned to reappoint George Banks, Dennis Robinson, and Jeff Oden for another term.

Commissioner House seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

2) Senior Tar Heel Legislative Delegates

Commissioner House motioned to reappoint Kaye White, as delegate, and Susanne Kelly, as alternate, for another two-year term.

Commissioner Tobin seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

3) College of the Albemarle Board of Trustees

Vice-Chairman Overman motioned to reappoint David Reide Corbett for another two-year term.

Commissioners Bateman and House seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

ITEM 13 – 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 Bateman

- Reflected on how the year had turned around from the onset of COVID19 to a bright future for the County.
- He had attended the Manteo Commons grand opening and commented it was a good combination of county, local municipality and Visitors Bureau efforts coming together with a good project.

Commissioner Couch

- We commented that even with the increases in revenues during COVID, the county staff had risen to the challenge to meet the demands in Health and Human Services and the Sheriff's Department. He was proud of the efforts going forward with the continued ability to provide the same level of community service.
- Hatteras is "kicking" and was set to have a good summer season.

Commissioner Tobin

- The Hatteras Village Offshore Open had been successful. The boat and crew of *Top Dog* won the tournament. He congratulated Rom Whitaker, who after fishing the tournament for twenty-seven years had landed a 574.5-pound blue marlin on the *Release*.
- He provided an update on the dredge construction. A recent drivetrain analysis for the outdrives for the dredge revealed there were a few problems to resolve. Lateral vibration analysis exceeded the specs with a full-powered 1,800 rpm. By dropping it to 1,700 rpm the lateral vibrations ceased. It was agreed to adjust the pitch of the props. He would provide updates as available.

Commissioner House

- Congratulated Mr. Outten, Mr. Clawson and the entire finance department on a well presented 2022 budget.
- Reported on notable events in history: First running of the Kentucky Derby in 1875, first televised baseball game in 1939 with Princeton beating Columbia, and in 1973 the televised Watergate trial began with NC Senator Sam Ervin, as the chairperson.
- Highlighted the SPCA dog of the week was Billy, an Australian shepherd mix breed.

Commissioner Ross

- He thanked Dave Clawson and his team for the work on the 2022 budget.
- Praised the well done presentations for Jennette's Pier and the National Park Service.
- He recognized the continued achievements of high school golfer Katherine Schuster, who was "off the charts talented".
- He reviewed the numbers of COVID-19 cases during the pandemic. He stated the trend of decline of cases was extremely reassuring and positive for our county.

Vice-Chairman Overman

- He had spoken with Steve Brewer, Director of Government Affairs at Lumen Technologies, who advised changes to the G.R.E.A.T. grant program were made and Lumen would review and see how this could benefit the county. Eric Collins with Charter Spectrum had not yet received a response from their engineering group regarding the extension of services into the mainland.
- He had attended the Manteo Commons grand opening. There were two more phases of improvements to follow with the addition of landscaping and perhaps a statue of Chief Manteo.
- He thanked the County Manager and Finance Director for a great budget presentation.

Chairman Woodard also thanked the finance staff for all of their hard work on the budget.

MANAGER'S/ATTORNEY'S BUSINESS

County Manager Outten reported the Governors order on Friday marked the beginning of the County's staff returning to normal with the exception of the health and transportation departments. He would have a staff meeting tomorrow to review transition plans as the County continued to follow CDC guidelines.

The Association of County Commissioners had brought attention to an amendment to HB729 with regard to charter schools. The current statute requires the county "per pupil" funding to be deducted from Dare school budget and sent to any Dare charter school attended by each pupil. As the public schools have fixed costs, which do not change, this is problematic for them. The proposed amendment would require a proportionate share of county capital funds paid to public schools be paid to any charter school. The Board discussed further with the County Attorney what full passage of the bill amendment would mean for the County.

MOTION

Commissioner Bateman motioned to oppose HB729 as presented.

Commissioner Couch seconded the motion.

VOTE: Ayes unanimous

Ms. Hester reminded the Board this week was Dare EMS week and was an opportunity for citizens to recognize their hard work. There was a coloring and poster contest as part of the week events with the 2021 theme of "This is EMS Caring for Our Communities".

Mr. Clawson shared the County would be receiving the first half of the American Rescue Plan funds. The plan was large and he would update the Board as details became available.

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

MOTION

Commissioner Tobin motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner House seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

At 7:24 p.m., the Board of Commissioners adjourned until 9:00 a.m., June 7, 2021.



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.