

The Sampson County Board of Commissioners convened for their regular meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, July 12, 2021, in the County Auditorium, 435 Rowan Road in Clinton, North Carolina. Members present: Chairman Clark Wooten, Vice Chairperson Sue Lee, and Commissioners Thaddeus Godwin, Jerol Kivett, and Lethia Lee.

Vice Chairperson Lee called the meeting to order and called on Commissioner Godwin to provide the invocation. Vice Chairperson Sue Lee then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Item 1: Reports and Presentations

Introduction of New Department Heads Sampson County Manager Ed Causey presented the new Library Director, Kelsey Edwards, and new Cooperative Extension Director, Brad Hardison. After brief comments from each, the Board welcomed Ms. Edwards and Mr. Hardison.

Item 2: Action Items – Public Water System Matters

Update on Bidding Iron/Manganese Treatment Project Public Works Director Lin Reynolds presented Dewberry Engineer Matt West who then provided an update on the bidding process for the Iron/Manganese Treatment project. As reported previously in April, the project had been separated into two contracts and rebid as Contract A – Buried Water Piping and Contract B – Manganese Treatment System. The rebid openings were held on June 28, 2021, and resulted in four received bids for Contract A and only two bids from reputable and qualified contractors for Contract B. The lowest responsible bidder for Contract A – Water Piping was Jones Smith Contractors, LLC, with a bid total of \$650,585. Due to only receiving two bids for Contract B at the June 28 bid opening, a rebid was scheduled for July 8, 2021. The same two bidders were the only two bids received. Jones Smith Contractors, LLC was the lowest responsible bidder for Contract B – Manganese Treatment System, with a bid total of \$1,738,900. The combined bid amount for the project was \$2,389,485 (which reflected a cost reduction of approximately \$600,000 as a result of the rebidding and the value engineering); however, only approximately \$2,000,790 is currently available in funding from the NC Division of Water Infrastructure. Mr. West noted that additional cost saving options were actively being pursued with Jones Smith Contractors, and additional funding options would be pursued with the assistance of NC Division of Water Infrastructure, per the Board’s request. Mr. West recommended that the two contracts be tentatively rewarded to Jones Smith

Contractors while additional funding is pursued. The County will have to cover the \$508,000 difference until additional costs savings are obtained.

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Kivett and seconded by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee, the Board voted unanimously to award the bid for Contract A – Buried Water Piping in the amount of \$650,585 to Jones Smith Contractors, LLC, contingent upon subsequent approval of the bid award documents by the NC Division of Water Infrastructure, and to adopt the associated Resolution of Tentative Award (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____ Page ____).

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Godwin and seconded by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee, the Board voted unanimously to award the bid for Contract B – Manganese Treatment System in the amount of \$1,738,900 to Jones Smith Contractors, LLC, contingent upon subsequent approval of the bid award documents by the NC Division of Water Infrastructure, and to adopt the associated Resolution of Tentative Award (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____ Page ____).

Request to Pursue Design, Permitting and Installation of 1.8 Miles of Water Line on South Eldridge Road Dewberry Engineer Matt West presented the request for the water line extension, noting that installation of water lines along South Eldridge Road would be a backup transmission line to support the primary line for the Johnston County Interconnection Phase II project. The total project costs of \$315,387 would be funded from water reserves. Upon a motion made by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee and seconded by Commissioner Kivett, the Board voted unanimously to approve the request to pursue the design, permitting and installation of 1.8 miles of water line on South Eldridge Road, utilizing funds from water reserves.

Acceptance of North Carolina Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Funding for Sampson-Johnston County Interconnection, Phase II Dewberry Engineer Matt West reviewed the revolving loan funding awarded by the State. Upon a motion made by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to adopt the resolution accepting \$3,148,000 in DWSRF loan funding and to authorize the execution of associated offer and acceptance documents (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____ Page ____).

Approval of the Amendments to Ordinances Implementing Rules and Regulations of Sampson County Water and Sewer Districts I and II Public Works Director Lin Reynolds reviewed the request originally presented during the June 7, 2021, regular scheduled meeting. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Kivett and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to approve, upon a second reading, the Amendments to Ordinances Implementing Rules and Regulations of Sampson County Water and Sewer Districts I and II (Copy filed in Ordinance Book ____ Page ____).

Item 3: Action Items - Other

Tax - Reappointment Tax Administrator Upon a motion made by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to re-appoint Jim Johnson for a four-year term as Tax Assessor and Tax Collector. Assistant County Manager Susan Holder administered oaths of office to Mr. Johnson as Tax Assessor and Tax Collector (Copies filed in Inc. Minute Book ____ Page ____.)

Tax - Tax Settlement and Charge to Tax Collector Tax Administrator Jim Johnson reported to the Board the amount of \$1,096,032.90 of unpaid taxes for the current fiscal year which are liens on real property. This total is \$324,895.98 less than the previous fiscal year. Mr. Johnson noted that Sampson County had collected 97.9% of real and personal property taxes, the highest collection rate ever achieved. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Kivett and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to accept the settlement and charge Tax Collector with collection of taxes for FY 2021-2022. (Copy of Tax Charge filed in Inc. Minute Book ____, Page ____.)

Emergency Services - Request for Update to 5-Mile and 6-Mile District Maps for Harrells Fire Department (does not impact response or tax districts) County Attorney Joel Starling presented the request noting that upon the recent completion of the second satellite station in the Harrells community the insurance maps are able to be redrawn, which is expected to provide benefit to all residents in the area. Mr. Starling was careful to note that the update will not affect response districts or tax districts, and that the small portion of Duplin County shown on the map proposal is governed by the Duplin County Board of Commissioners. He concluded by noting that following the Board's approval of the new boundaries the Department of Insurance will need to approve the update. Upon a motion made by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee and seconded by Commissioner Lethia Lee, the Board voted unanimously to approve the new insurance district map as presented, subject to final approval by the State Department of Insurance (Map filed in Inc. Minute Book ____ Page ____.)

Designation of Voting Delegate - NCACC Annual Conference (August 14, 2021) Upon a motion made by Chairman Wooten and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to designate Commissioner Kivett to serve as the voting delegate at the 2021 NCACC Annual Conference, August 14, 2021. (Copy of the NCACC Designation Form filed in Inc. Minute Book ____, Page ____.)

Public Hearing - Naming of Private Roads The Chairman opened the hearing and called upon Assistant County Manager Susan Holder who reviewed the recommendations for naming certain private roads as follows:

PVT 1749 1116 79 142

Miry Creek Lane

There were no public comments offered. Upon a motion made by Commissioner Godwin and seconded by Commissioner Lethia Lee, the Board voted unanimously to name the private roads as recommended.

Jury Commission Upon a motion made by Vice Chairperson Lee and seconded by Commissioner Kivett, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Mary Tew to the Jury Commission.

Item 4: Consent Agenda

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Kivett and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as follows:

- a. Approved the minutes of the June 7, 2021; June 15, 2021; and June 22, 2021 meetings
- b. Awarded the bid for the Department of Aging's Nutrition Program to Gibbs Management, the lowest responsive/responsible bidder at \$3.95 (congregate cost per meal-124), \$4.35 (home delivered cost per meal-150), and \$.35 (low sodium cost per snack-30) (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____ Page ____.)
- c. Accepted Supplemental Nutrition Funding in the amount of \$39,949 and authorized execution of associated agreements and funding plan (Copies filed in Inc. Minute Book ____ Page ____.)
- d. Awarded the bid for the Clinton-Sampson Airport FBO Apron Rehabilitation Project to Highland Paving Company, LLC, and authorized execution of the associated contract documents (Copies filed in Inc. Minute Book ____ Page ____.)
- e. Approved an extension of the lease between the County and USDA for 5,620 square feet of space at 80 County Complex Road from January 1, 2022, through December 31, 2024 (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____ Page ____.)
- f. Authorized execution of the Cooperative Service Agreement between USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services and Sampson County for Beaver Management Assistance Program Services (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____ Page ____.)
- g. Approved the Tax Department's request for destruction of certain records pursuant to the County's Records Retention and Disposition Schedule (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____ Page ____.)

- h. Authorized the execution of the Detention Center equipment maintenance contract between Sampson County and Cornerstone Detention Products, In. (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____ Page ____.)
- i. Declared as surplus and authorized sale of discarded Emergency Services Motorola XTL2500 Mobile and Portable radios to Sunny Communications (List filed in Inc. Minute Book ____ Page ____.)
- j. Approved the delinquent property tax exemption requests for Horace Bass and Stanley William Coombes
- k. Authorized the waiver of late list penalties for business personal property listings for Clinton Mechanical Contractors, Inc.; Barefoot's Lot Clearing, Inc.; Miller Control & Manufacturing Co., Inc.; David H. Hobson, Attorney at Law; Big Blue Store of Clinton, Inc.; and Baldwin & Hodge, LLP
- l. Approved tax refunds and releases as submitted:

#9598	John Fussell	\$159.92
#9599	Andy Brock	\$274.55
#9608	Richard Flowers	\$101.55
#9613	Lattie Faircloth	\$172.35
#9622	Nikin Henry	\$113.08
#9625	Zayne Trent	\$180.25
#9621	Sharon Herring	\$294.28
#9633	Brandy Blackburn	\$172.99
#9634	Reyna Menjivarmonje	\$104.65

- m. Approved budget amendments as submitted:

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		Airport Apron		
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
40981390	519500	Professional services engineer	\$101,212.00	
40981390	559100	Paving	\$424,788.00	

<u>REVENUE</u>				
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
40981390	404000	State Grant	\$526,000.00	

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>		Elections		
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
12551240	544000	Contract services	\$10,533.00	
12551230	526200	Dept supplies	\$480.00	
12551230	526201	Dept supplies equip	\$4,771.00	
12551230	555000	Capital outlay other	\$24,602.00	
11449500	529900	Miscellaneous	\$5,025.00	
11243200	554000	Capital outlay vehicle	\$29,862.00	

11243200	555000	Capital outlay other	\$26,916.00
11243200	538100	Data processing programming	\$53,926.00

REVENUE

<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
12535124	404000	State funds	\$10,533.00	
12535123	404000	State funds	\$29,853.00	
11039999	409800	Approp fund balance encumbrances	\$115,729.00	

Item 6: County Manager’s Report

County Manager Ed Causey reminded the Board of Water Summit scheduled for July 27, 2021, at 4 p.m. in the Administration Building Conference Room. He then noted that the Board and staff work diligently to provide thorough and exhaustive research prior to making recommendations of any project, having the long-term effects and unintended consequences in mind.

Item 7: Public Comment Period

Following a brief review of the public comment guidelines provided by Assistant County Manager Susan Holder, Chairman Wooten opened the floor for comment. The following were received:

Danielle Koonce: A few months ago, I had the opportunity to help collect water samples throughout the County through a collaborative project coordinated by EJ Cannon and Appalachian State University. In total we visited 61 homes from Turkey to Ivanhoe in Sampson County. Upon listening to various community members, two issues were reverberated throughout these predominately black communities. Number one was the damage and lost of quality of life that has been caused to the Snowhill community, and neighboring communities, due to the Sampson County landfill. And number two, the difficulty for community members throughout Sampson County to access county water rather than using ground well water when they have issues with their water. The Sampson County landfill has been toxic to the communities that reside near it. We heard story after story of the terrible gaseous smell that emanates from the landfill and seeps into the homes of the residents that live nearby. A smell that travels as far away as the Lakewood Country Club. We learned that the landfill receives trash as far away as New York City, and even from trash waste that comes in from barges through Wilmington, North Carolina. We know that chemical waste from the controversial chemical plant Chemours, in Bladen County, and coal ash has been disposed of in the Sampson County landfill. Although many of the residents who live near the landfill are on county water, some are not. We also listened to community members share how they can no longer garden or enjoy the outdoors due to the thick odor and fumes from the landfill. And I can personally attest by being there that it is really that think, whereby you can smell it and almost see the gas. One community member even shared that there

was a cancer cluster in their community with over 6 households – this was on the same street – having a family member with cancer. The water issue was not limited to Snowhill. Residents from Turkey, Roseboro, Rosehill, Delway, Clinton, and Ivanhoe shared their concerns and desires to be on county water. For some the hog farms and hog waste that was sprayed in neighboring fields caused them to be concerned, including my father’s church at Mt. Zion in Delway, where they actually had to dig their own well. It cost about \$3,500 because they had such high nitrate levels due to hog waste that was being sprayed near the church. For others they simply wanted to be connected to county water. And they had been told that it wasn’t possible, or two, it was too expensive for them to connect. I think the fee is \$500 and then you have your monthly water bill, if you’re able. Some people aren’t able to access county water. Residents on Lakewood School Road were particularly concerned about their ground water. One resident on Lakewood School Road spoke of brown ice cubes and not being able to garden due to the landfill. What is particularly egregious about the Lakewood School Road community is that Lakewood High School is on county water, Lakewood Country Club is on county water, but the residents – mostly black residents – who are right there between Lakewood High School and the Country Club, they’ve been refused access to city water for at least almost 20 years. In spite of the flooding and hurricane risks that have caused ground water to be unsafe, particularly for the residents who live near the landfill, or hog and poultry farms, people are still being denied access to healthy, clean water. I read the budget that was created by the department of Public Works and in their letter, which was written February 10, 2021, they state that the only project on the horizon needed now is an additional well in the Keener area to supplement our water system. They also say that most of our new taps are in the Plainview region and the water is purchased from Dunn. I did not see any mentioning of adding new wells to any areas in district four, such as Lakewood School Road or in the Union Elementary/high school, or Ivanhoe area. Federal money has been earmarked for counties to improve their water and sewage infrastructure. I am asking the Board to really think about this. Lastly, my uncle’s water was also tested. He had high arsenic levels. I asked if they had any financial assistance for veterans or military. They said they don’t have any financial assistance. He had to come out of his pocket and pay \$75 to have his water tested by the Health Department. They also notified us that it would take six weeks because they are behind. So, for the next 2-3 months he’s going to be having to drink bottled water until they can get someone out there. I think it’s really sad that our residents don’t have enough money and have to pay out of their pockets to handle issues not caused by them. Thank you. I’m sorry I went over time but thank you for hearing my concerns.

Elouise Jacobs: I imagine that most of you all have never heard of Waycross because I am getting that feeling when I am talking to people saying they have never heard of Waycross and we’ve been there over 70 years, cause that is where I was born in Sampson County. And I am very concerned. Back in the nineties, well actually in the seventies, they built a hog farm right within quarter of a mile of where I live. My water,

we cannot drink it, we cannot wash clothes, or anything. I don't even wear white clothes because when you wash them they turn yellow. We have these smells and you have to buy detergent that has odor treatment in order to wash clothes if I use my water from my well. In around 1998 Murphy's hog farm tested my water and it was so bad that they put me a big well down, which lasted about 10 years. After about 10 years I went back to them because I was having the same problems all over again. And they told me that they weren't going to do anything else about my water and whatever else was done, I had to do it on my own. Well, I asked the County about it a few years ago. They told me that there wasn't enough people on my road to put the county water in. Then a little bit later they told me that the money had been used to build the new Union High School. I asked them, "Don't I pay taxes"? I mean over in Waycross we too have to pay taxes. We don't have the water, garbage pickup, we don't have any of that in the Waycross area. So, if someone was to drive through the Waycross area they would think that we are just some kind of community just sitting there. We are in the Taylor's Bridge Township and I understand from today that we don't even have ambulance service there. So, I have a lot of questions as to what they are doing with our tax money that we can't have the normal services that should be provided to people. My main concern is the county water because like I said, we cannot drink our water, which I am on a deep well system that my brother had put down at our family house. I shouldn't have to be on another system that I have to be pumped down to another house in order to have pure drinking water. So, like I said, I do have a lot of concerns as to why we don't have anything in the Waycross area that would come from when we pay our county taxes; such as water, garbage disposal, and ambulance services. Thank you.

Alan Williams: I want you to know that I am here speaking on behalf of the Taylor's Bridge Fire Department, it's members, our Board of Directors, the residents of the lower end of Sampson County, and also as the President of the Sampson County Fire Fighter's Association, which consists of over 500 volunteers who serve this county on a 24/7 basis. I come before you again, first of all to extend our condolences to and continued prays to Ms. Lethia Lee on the passing of her husband. We'll continue to keep you in our prayers. I'll also ask this Board of Commissioners to keep in your prayers the Jernigan family from Faison. Chief Jernigan passed away. He did a lot for this county even though he was the fire chief of Faison for many, many years, he also assisted with emergency situations here in Sampson County. If you would, keep that family in your prayers too. I come to you tonight asking that you reconsider adding the personnel to staff an additional EMS truck in the southern end of Sampson County. I know there was some discussions after the original public hearing meeting. There was that \$230,000 number that was revised, and I think Mr. Clack or somebody came up with \$481,000, so I don't know where the exact number is. Just with six paramedics that run 3 shifts on that truck. It doesn't take \$481,000 to operate the trucks we have in place now. The six trucks that we are currently operating, it doesn't cost \$481,000 per truck. You can do it with an EMT and a paramedic, or a combination of that. When the truck is gone from the southern end of Sampson County, that's it. We don't have anybody else down there.

This county is too large to run six ALS ambulances. We need more. I understand, I've spoken with Commissioner Wooten. And I do appreciate it, I've reached out to all of you and most all of you have responded back. I do appreciate that. If you pass it tonight, you're still six months out. It's not going to happen overnight. There's a hiring process, there are SOGs that have to be put in place for the new truck. We've got to figure out where to put it. There's three ambulances sitting at the EMS base on Woodrow Street right now. You don't have to buy the ambulances, they're already there. Three of them. Sitting there. Unstaffed. Three's six locations in the southern end of Sampson County that are willing to donate the space to house those employees. It won't cost the county a dime. The taxpayers of Taylor's Bridge just built a brand new station. Hopefully in about four weeks we'll come back to you and get permission to open that up. The bay is there. The facilities are there to staff it. So again, I ask that you reconsider that. I have high hopes for the gentleman coming from New York. I don't understand personally why we couldn't find somebody here at home to run Emergency Services as we've done in the past, but I do have high hopes and I look forward to working with him and getting through this. We don't have time for a study. We need a truck now for the southern end of the county that will benefit the whole county. When you have to pull resources from Newton Grove to come to a motor vehicle accident in Taylor's Bridge, you're pulling resources from the northern end of the county. It's extended traveling distances. You're putting too much pressure on the EMS personnel. My last thing I've got to say is I cannot tell you how proud I am with every volunteer in this county. The taxpayers, they understand it and they appreciate it. If Sampson County had to pay first responders for what they do, you're looking an excess of \$20,000,000 per year to the pay personnel to do what our volunteers here at home do every day. And I couldn't be any more proud of them. But we're asking and I'm asking for this commission and this county to add another EMS unit as soon as possible. Thank you.

Recess to Reconvene

Upon a motion made by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee and seconded by Commissioner Kivett, the Board voted unanimously to recess to reconvene on July 27, 2021 at 4 p.m. in the Administration Building Conference Room.

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Clark H. Wooten, Chairman

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Susan J. Holder, Clerk to the Board