

The Sampson County Board of Commissioners convened for their regular meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, October 3, 2022, in the County Auditorium, 435 Rowan Road in Clinton, North Carolina. Members present: Chairperson Sue Lee, Vice Chairperson Jerol Kivett, and Commissioners Thaddeus Godwin, Lethia Lee, and Clark Wooten.

Chairperson Sue Lee called the meeting to order and turned the meeting over to Vice Chairperson Kivett. Vice Chairperson Kivett called upon Commissioner Godwin who provided the invocation. Vice Chairperson Kivett then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Upon a motion by Commissioner Godwin and seconded by Commissioner Lee, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda as published.

### **Item 1: Direction for Staff Related to Resolution of Employee Compensation Issues**

Chairperson Lee made the following statement:

Each of us, from the day we took our oaths as County Commissioners, have accepted our responsibility to ensure that our employees are supported and compensated fairly and equitably. Moreover, we have accepted our responsibility to comply with the fiscal policies of state law and our obligation to our taxpayers to use their tax dollars in a prudent manner that allows us to provide programs and services, either mandated or needed by our citizens, while at the same time limiting our tax rate so as to encourage the investment of industry here in Sampson County. That guarantees that our decisions may be difficult and unpopular at times. As we seek to do the right thing on the employee compensation matters at hand, we ask the County Manager to develop options for consideration at our November meeting that to the greatest extent possible achieve the following three items:

1. Improves the County's ability to recruit employees, particularly for the most critical positions in public safety, for example, law enforcement, emergency services and telecommunicators, and human services (DSS and Health Department).
2. Maintain equity in our pay classification system to avoid unintended consequences when one classification of employees receives consideration and others are not included.
3. Remains mindful of the impact that any recommendation to current and future budgets so that the impact to our taxpayers is mitigated.

### **Item 2: Public Hearings**

Public Hearing – Proposed Expenditures for Economic Development Purchases (Exercise of Previously Negotiated Option and Acquisition of Warren Property) Pursuant to G.S. 158-7.1, the County is required to hold a public hearing before expending money for the purchase of an interest in real property. The hearing was previously advertised for August, but

additional due diligence needed to be completed. The hearing was readvertised for this meeting. Chairperson Lee opened the public hearing and called upon Economic Developer Stephen Barrington and County Attorney Joel Starling who reviewed the proposed exercise of an option to purchase ten parcels comprised of 210.85± acres near the intersection of I-40 and Harnett-Dunn Highway. Chairperson Lee then opened the floor for public comments. Hearing none, she closed the public hearing. Chairperson Lee suggested that the Board table this decision and reconvene on Wednesday, October 26, 2022, at 10:00 A.M. in the Administrative Board Room.

**Item 3: Action Items**

Airport – Consideration of Clinton-Sampson Airport Hangar Lease Chairperson Lee called upon County Attorney Joel Starling who explained that the County and City have been in negotiations with a prospective tenant, Moore’s Aerial Applicators, LLC, and Michael K. Rivenbark, for an airport hangar lease. Under the terms of the proposed lease agreement, the tenant would lease a 1.51± acre portion of the main Airport parcel and construct an 80’X80’ hangar which would become the property of the County and the City. The initial lease term would be for a period of thirty (30) years. This matter was initially noticed for the August 1, 2022 regular meeting but was continued to the September 12, 2022 meeting to give the tenant additional time to provide needed information to the County and the City. Prior to the September regular meeting, the tenant requested a change to the rent provisions of the lease, which required that a new public notice be published. The terms of the proposal have since been finalized. Upon a motion by Chairperson Lee and seconded by Vice Chairperson Kivett, the Board voted unanimously to adopt the resolution authorizing lease of real property. (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_\_.)

Award of Bid for Construction of Storage Building for Sheriff’s Office and Emergency Services Chairperson Lee called on Public Works Director Lin Reynolds who explained that Sampson County sought and received grant funding in the amount of \$3.0 million for the construction of a storage building serving the needs of the Sheriff’s Office and Emergency Services. At the August meeting, the Board approved the facility design and authorized bid of the project. Only two bids were received at the first scheduled bid opening, so the project was readvertised for bid. At the time of agenda preparation, bids were scheduled to be opened on September 28<sup>th</sup> and be subsequently reviewed by our architect for award recommendation. Mr. Reynolds informed the Board that the bids came in under the recommended budget. The architects and Public Works staff both recommended extending the size of the building in order to utilize available funding. The building size could increase from 150’ X 75’ to 150’ X 90’ and still stay within budget. Upon a motion by Vice Chairperson Kivett and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to award the bid for construction of the storage building to the lowest responsive responsible bidder, Jackson Builders Inc. as recommended, and to authorize expansion of the building. (Bid tabulation sheet filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_\_.)

Water District – Award of Bid for Construction of Elevated Storage Tanks Chairperson Lee called upon David Ross of Dewberry Engineers who discussed bids for the construction of

an elevated water tank which were originally scheduled to be opened on September 8, 2022. The bids could not be opened at that time as only two bids were received. The bids were readvertised and opened on September 22, 2022. Upon a motion by Commissioner Godwin and seconded by Commissioner Lethia Lee, the Board voted unanimously to award the bid for construction of the elevated storage tanks to the lowest responsive, responsible bidder, Caldwell Tanks, at a contract award of \$5,025,100.

Appointments – Workforce Development Board Upon a motion by Vice Chairperson Kivett and seconded by Chairperson Lee, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Mayor Alice Butler of Roseboro to the Workforce Development Board.

**Item 4: Consent Agenda**

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

- a. Approved the minutes of the September 12, 2022, September 21, 2022, and September 26, 2022 meetings
- b. Approved a request from Sampson-Clinton Public Library to apply for and accept (if awarded) Grassroots Arts Program Grant funding
- c. Accepted a Dollar General Youth Literacy Grant Award in the amount of \$3,000 for children’s literacy programs/materials
- d. Declared as surplus a Sig Sauer 9mm pistol (serial number 47A065112) and authorized transfer of the service weapon to retiring employee Christopher Oates
- e. Adopted a resolution requesting NCDOT add Enterprise Drive to the state secondary roads system (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_.)
- f. Authorized the execution of the EMS Clinical Internship Agreement between Sampson County and the Clinton City Board of Education (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_.)
- g. Approved the execution of contracts between Sampson County (DSS) and non-emergency medical transportation service providers: The Gardens of Roseboro and The Magnolia (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_.)
- h. Adopted a resolution authorizing execution of the Interlocal Agreement for Tax Collection with the Town of Autryville (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_.)
- i. Approved the Sampson County Ingestion Pathway Zone (IPZ) Emergency Plan (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_.)
- j. Approved late applications for disabled veterans tax exclusions for Charlie Junior Robinson, Darrell Wilson, and Michael F. Jones
- k. Approved the tax refunds and releases as submitted

#9973	Jerry Lavon Crutch	\$105.27
#9997	Jonathan Wiggins	\$170.80
#10005	Crystal Sessoms	\$134.06

#10001	Johnnie Lee Warren	\$416.25
#9999	Jerry Lawrence Lee Sr.	\$481.50
Tax Release	Carolina Custom	\$267.90
Tax Release	Thornton Homes Co.	\$164.40
Tax Release	Scott Westbrook, Jr.	\$530.61
Tax Release	Joyce Thornton	\$371.59
Tax Release	Chris & Susan Baillergeon	\$668.70

l. Approved budget amendments as submitted

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		Health Department	
<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
12551250	512100 Salaries	\$83,952.	
12551250	518100 FICA	\$5,205.	
12551250	518120 Medicare FICA	\$1,218.	
12551250	518200 Retirement	\$10,075.	
12551250	518300 Dental Insurance	\$288.	
12551250	518901 401K	\$6,297.	

<b>REVENUE</b>			
<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
12535125	404000 State Assistance	\$115,000.	

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		Library	
<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11761100	531100 Travel	\$1,164.	

<b>REVENUE</b>			
<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11036110	403625 Reimbursement for ASRL Scholarship From State Library	\$1,164.	

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		Transportation	
<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
16145000	525100 Gas, Oil, and Tires	\$162,000.	

<b>REVENUE</b>			
<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
16134500	403611 State ARRA Grant	\$162,000.	

**Consent Agenda (as Board of Health)**

- m. Approved the Tobacco Free Campus Policy Update (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_\_.)
- n. Approve a Fee/CPT Code Update (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_\_.)
- o. Approved the Fiscal Services Policy Update (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_\_.)

**Item 5: Board Information**

The Board received the following items as information only:

- a. Letter from Town of Salemburg Re: Law Enforcement Services
- b. Letter of Appreciation from Sampson County History Museum
- c. (Board of Health Item) July 18, 2022 Health Advisory Board Minutes

**Item 6: County Manager's Report**

Chairperson Lee called upon County Manager Ed Causey who discussed the Ivanhoe Water Project celebration event. He specifically acknowledged Matt West and David Ross of Dewberry Engineers and Public Works Director Lin Reynolds for their diligent work on the project. He then recognized Commissioner Lethia Lee's advocacy work for her community.

**Item 7: Public Comment Period**

Following a brief overview of Public Comment Period Policies and Procedures by Assistant County Manager Susan Holder, Chairperson Lee opened the floor for public comments. The following were received:

Robert McKenzie, 35 Oak Hill Drive, Dunn, North Carolina – I just want to talk about funding the Sheriff's Department. I just hope and pray because the Sheriff's Department don't have enough backup, that if one of them happens to be killed, and one of you goes to the wake, and the Sheriff's Department officers turn their back on you and showing they did not respect you because they didn't have back up. You will be just guilty as whoever pulled that trigger or however they were killed, you will have the blood of those officers on your hands. We were just lucky that the young lady was only shot in the legs. And that's about all I've got to say. I've seen other places. I lived in Washington, D.C. and I saw how the police department went down, the criminals took over and you can bet these criminals are talking amongst themselves about having only four officers on duty at night. That's all I've got to say. Thank you.

Jackie Cashwell, 470 Bucktown Road, Clinton, NC – I would also like to talk about funding the Sheriff's Department. I know we have thirty-three officers that work for the Clinton Police Department. About eight square miles. A little over nine hundred officers for the rural community of over nine hundred square miles. And they're all divided out, so we have nothing really to protect us. We need them to be our first responders because they are the first responders and they don't just arrest bad people, they save lives. And the pay scale needs to be even. So, whatever needs to happen, my taxpayer dollars need to be even, and not just one way or the other. I think you mentioned equality in pay, and I'd like to see that happen and more officers hired to protect the citizens. Thank you.

Brenda Blakely, 470 Bucktown Road, Clinton, NC – My father was an advocate for the County Sheriff's Department. He's no longer with us and I'm going to take up his stance. I actually called one of the Board members a couple of weeks ago and I was told that there was no funding for the Sheriff's Department and I'm not sure you said something that we have to raise taxes, well, whatever we have to do, because we don't feel safe. We see it in the news all the time. I'm watching, it pops up on my phone, things happening in Clinton, things are

happening out in the county — we don't have enough sheriffs. It's just not acceptable. We don't feel safe. And I was born and raised here. We need our officers to be supported in every way. Thank you.

Wayne High, 1235 Timberlake Drive, Clinton, NC – Good evening. Not to break the trend I'm going to talk about the Sheriff's Department also. Over the last months we've had considerable discussions and everything for wages and salaries has been in percentages. In my forty-two years of building budgets percentages didn't mean a whole lot. So, in order to add some clarity I went back to the year prior to the great pay plan and I picked randomly seven departments within the County and I looked at the department heads and above. Interesting enough, three of those people have received increases in excess of \$45,000, one in excess of \$40,000, one in excess of \$25,000, one in excess of \$18,000. Keep in mind that some of those departments didn't even exist prior to the pay plan. Then I slipped over to the Sheriff's Department and a starting Deputy 1 over that time period received an increase of four dollars short of \$10,000. Ladies and gentlemen, if that's equity, I got a problem. I think we need to look at where are our tax dollars really going. We bought a lot of land. We didn't have any trouble doing that. But, yet, we don't have enough money to fund the Sheriff's Department. Thank you for your time.

Eddie Waters, 306 Royal Road, Roseboro, North Carolina – I can tell you first hand what the first gentleman spoke about. If we are talking about the shortage of deputies and equipment and funding, there's other people that are talking about it. It got so bad in the area that I lived in, that my wife and I had to sell our house and we have recently moved. I can see that effect that it's having on the deputies and it's pitiful that our deputies feel like they do. I had a deputy tell me that, if I didn't like where I lived, to move. And it got bad enough, it got bad enough that I didn't want to leave my wife at home to go to work because I was afraid that I would come home and she would be shot. I've heard bullets going through the trees in my yard. I've had people riding dirt bikes up to my front door. I'm going to tell everybody; I think it's a crying shame that that man back there has got to beg for help to protect Sampson County. I think we need to do whatever it takes to take care of the Sheriff's Department so they can take care of us. Thank you.

Reed Mattocks, 305 Pineview Road, Clinton, North Carolina – Ladies and gentlemen, I'm not going to repeat what has been touched on. What I am going to comment on is two extra things. I don't have enough time to go through all the numbers. I've been in emergency services, volunteer and paid, for twenty years. I've never had a failure to be able to fund my department. Also, I want Deputy Caitlin Emanuel's incident to be a wake-up call to everyone. What happened to her that night — a gunshot wound that should have been fatal — is a divine intervention that there was a deputy close enough to her to render medical aid, save her life and get her definitive care. You've got these men and women spread out. They don't have backup. They get shot, it's over. And whose feet does that land at? The people that fund them. Jimmy Thornton should not have to beg to protect his deputies. We're not safe and our deputies are not safe. You can't have government, you can't have commerce, and you can't have agriculture without safety. You can't even have safe schools. So, when you look at a \$170 million budget, and yes, he does get \$14 million. But if he needs more, you find it. It's that simple. You find it. I understand money here, money there, but it's priorities. Cause like I said, without safety, nothing else happens. You lose everything without safety. And right now Sampson County is experiencing a monumental crime spike. Thank you for your time.

Wendy Taylor, 2556 Greens Bridge Road, Garland, North Carolina – I stand before you today as a taxpaying citizen, friend to some, and current Sampson County Republican Party Secretary. It's unfortunate for those of us who have unwillingly been placed in the position to choose between our Sheriff and our Republican Commissioners. Let me be clear, I stand behind our Sheriff. Support for law enforcement is one of the many reasons that I have been a life-long Republican and it is also the reason that I am embarrassed to be standing here pleading for adequate funding from a Republican-controlled Board. As I watched Mrs. Holder's September 21<sup>st</sup> ninety-plus page presentation, I learned that she spent a lot of time monitoring the Sheriff's social media page and her rebuttal was geared toward fact-checking his claims. I did find it awfully convenient that this workshop was held during the middle of the day when most people are working and in such a way that the public wasn't allowed to ask questions, and none of the information that she presented as fact could be refuted. Also, during this segment, I learned that Mr. Causey has thirty-plus years of government experience, which immediately helped me identify our county's problem. Never once has a life-long bureaucrat solved a problem or made the lives of the people they were hired to serve better. Mr. Causey has reigned supremely in Sampson County for years now aided and abetted by Clark Wooten. While we the people can't fire Mr. Causey, District One certainly fired Mr. Wooten. His constituents spoke loud and clear despite tens of thousands of dollars spent, an expensive appearance by Lara Trump, and Chairwoman Sue Lee's warm and fuzzy endorsement. I honestly thought that our Board would take that as a sign that we were fed up with the direction the Causey/Wooten duo was taking our County. Yet here you all sit continuing to allow the County Manager to take you down the same political suicide path in which he led Clark Wooten. Our Sheriff is elected, so if we thought he wasn't doing his job we'd fire him too. This Sheriff doesn't answer to the County Manager, and I commend him for that. I don't want a Sheriff that answers to a bureaucrat regardless of their political affiliation. Absolute power corrupts absolutely. In conclusion, Mr. Boykin and Ms. Lee, I don't expect push back from the County Manager for you two considering your party's stance on defunding the police. That doesn't mean that your inaction is excusable. Mr. Wooten, there is no point in addressing you because you're on the way out and I doubt anyone will miss your ego or your toddler-like temper tantrums. Chairwoman Lee, you're on the wrong side of history on this one. Your alignment with Mr. Causey and Mr. Wooten will be your downfall in the next election. The people will not forget your lack of action and leadership during this crisis. We also won't forget your social media misinformation campaign from the comforts of your home in a low crime area protected fully by the fully funded Clinton City Police. Mr. Kivett, I know you've worked with the Sheriff many times helping him in ways other commissioners refused to and it's not fair that you get lumped in with the other four. That must be frustrating for you and as your friend and as a person who has a great deal of respect for you, I hope you'll eventually decide to take a stand for what's right because I truly believe you want to fix the problem. It takes courage to be the lone dissenting voice and I hope you find the courage to do that soon. Sampson County needs your leadership now more than ever. You two are going to have to pick a side just like the rest of us. The County Manager or the Sheriff because you can't support both in this and we need experienced deputies far more than we need an experienced County Manager.

Bob Graczyk, 2556 Greens Bridge Road, Parkersburg, North Carolina – Since January 1, Sampson County, I'm not saying just the Sheriff's Department, but the entire county has lost seventeen law enforcement officers from the Sheriff's Department, including detention.

Seventeen. I'm glad the number one priority now of the Commissioners is to get the County Manager to do something about it. We lost seventeen officers that had knowledge, skills, and abilities that would save us. All of them had training before they became a sheriff. Some retired, but some went for different pay. Matter of fact, the average pay for sheriff's deputies or police officers around the area is actually \$42,446. Oh, this can't be refuted. This is the fact. The detention officer starting salary is \$38,864 and that's all without experience. Sampson County law enforcement salary is \$38,160 for a law enforcement officer. The starting salary for a detention officer is \$32,892. Why did we lose a deputy today to another county? Today. Why did we lose another one? Sampson County isn't a county without the Sheriff's Department. Why do you divide a line between the Sheriff's Department and the rest of the County? It's all one. We don't have a county without law enforcement. Leaders lead. Step up to the plate and lead us through to some resolution to get law enforcement officers out on the beat where they need to be. In vehicles. And how many law enforcement officers did we have for the hurricane with the bad rains that we got? I don't think any overtime was authorized. Leaders lead. Thank you for your time.

Ken Davis, 101 King Road, Clinton, North Carolina - The first thing I would like to say, every morning, to all the people, I know I can't ask questions, but every morning when a deputy puts his uniform on, he walks there and tells his wife and his little child, children, whatever, goodbye. That might be the last goodbye because when he gets out and he calls for backup and there is no backup, and somebody puts a bullet in him...what, what? There's no excuse for this. I think Mr. Jimmy needs funding 100%. Each and every one of us has family. I'm sure y'all do. If you don't, I'm sorry you don't. But I'm sure everybody that's here is represented by a family and we need to wake up because at night when we're sitting at home watching TV drinking a drink in our recliner, our big fancy TV, them deputies are out there at the mercy of the world. Because when the sun goes down here in Sampson County it's a damn disgusting rat race. Drugs, crime and everything. And I hope everybody stands up. And I hope the County Commissioners need to wake up. And we would like to see y'all fund and support the Sheriff's Department 100%. Thank you.

Bonnie Bruce, 960 West Darden Road, Clinton, North Carolina - I've lived here, I'm from Raleigh, I lived in Raleigh in Wake County. I moved down here to get away from Raleigh. Anyway, but I became immediately impressed with Sheriff Jimmy Thornton, who I only just met tonight, but I want you to understand that I felt his presence. I felt his dedication. I've had occasion to meet some of his deputies. Some of the finest people I've ever met. I read over that ninety-five-page report and I was very impressed with the detail, the analysis, and the effort. But my biggest question that I came away from, with, from is your priorities. I appreciate that you want to build a new, I think, facility, new football facility at Lakewood High School. You can spend a quarter of a million dollars there, but you can't fund some more deputies? We've got the biggest county I believe in North Carolina. That's a big obstacle right there. You should have more deputies here than just about anywhere. I know that we don't have as many people which is one of the things that I find appealing. But they've got a lot of ground to cover and the times have changed, y'all. You've got to wake up. We live in a different world than we did two, three years ago. There are more criminals walking free and people, these judges letting them out and turning around. That eighty-year-old grandmother getting killed up in Person County by a violent felon who had just been let go. I don't know who has lost their minds, but y'all get y'all's back and get your priorities in right order. We have got to have more deputies.



Period. Okay? You just have to wrap your heads around that, and you are all very inventive people and you're all smart to have figured all the details. I worked in government. I know how documentation and the tedious cross the t's and dot the i's, y'all have got that down pat. You've just got to squeeze some money out from somewhere. I believe I heard you say, correct me if I'm wrong, y'all are going to let somebody build a hangar on County property and charge them \$2,000 per year rent, and after what forty years or whatever they're going to have paid us \$90,000 and we're going to own a forty-year-old building? Y'all got to think better than that now, I mean, you could get more money out of him. He's going to be making more than that. I mean come on now, squeeze some out of that and get some deputies in here. I'll help you. I'll help you but y'all got to do right, now. Come on. Do it. Just do right. Get us some deputies. Keep our people safe. Keep our deputies safe for crying out loud. See the writing on the walls.

Dee Bryant, 309 Parker Drive, Clinton, North Carolina - Good evening. I agree with the need for additional funding for the Sheriff's Department and the deputies, but I'm here to talk about the detention center. I've worked with Dr. Sessoms in providing jail health care since 2007. It's been our objective since day one to provide efficient and quality care for all the inmates that enter the detention center. We've witnessed a decrease in the detention center staffing and the shortage has now begun to affect the medical department. I'd like to present and case and point for you. An inmate was admitted to the facility on August 26. It is our policy to perform a medical intake screen within 48 hours, however, her screen was not performed until August 30 because she came in intoxicated, and she was withdrawing from heroin and from meth. On her initial screen she was a very poor historian, but all she could allude to was her drug problem and she stated she was getting suboxone for withdrawal from the Wayne Family Medical. However, we requested records and there were none. We did not receive any. On the 10<sup>th</sup> she did place in a sick call to be seen for her ear. Dr. Sessoms saw her on the 10<sup>th</sup> and she was treated for this. He asked to see her again on the 12<sup>th</sup> for a follow-up evaluation, however, we were told that because of staffing shortages she couldn't be brought to the medical to be seen. On the 14<sup>th</sup> an officer requested us to see her because she was having some difficulties and still complaining about her ears. Upon her arrival to medical Dr. Sessoms saw that she could hardly walk. They did a blood sugar on her, and it was over 700. She did not have a history of being diabetic. She was then transferred to Sampson Regional ER and was diagnosed with diabetic ketoacidosis. She was placed in observation 48 hours there and from that she was admitted inpatient status on the 16<sup>th</sup> where she remained until the 20<sup>th</sup>. It was determined at the hospital that she was a new onset diabetic and had some other medical issues. Due to her condition an attempt was made by administration to contact her attorney to have her bond reduced, for early out, to get her court appearance earlier, and probation was also contacted. However, all attempts to get her released failed. She is currently in women's prison for medical safekeeping due to the critical nature of her illness. This is just one case of medical issues due to shortage in staffing at the detention center. Shortage not only results in the delay of care, but also in the cost for us, for the County. I implore you to help us help you by increasing the staffing in the detention center. Thank you.

Valerie Choate, 9090 US Hwy. 701 S., Newton Grove, North Carolina - I'm an outreach minister in Johnston County. I was asked by Sheriff Jimmy Thornton to be here tonight. I am in the process, God willing, hopefully purchasing a church and a piece of property here in your county on Highway 701 in between Newton Grove and Clinton and after being here tonight and hearing all your citizens of your county speak, I'm kind of hesitant now, because, yeah, this

is, this is wow, crazy. I'm a wife, I'm a mother of five beautiful children, and I'm also a minister as well. But before I became a minister, I was a student of criminal justice and I'm the first one to admit that I backed down. I left my training, Phi Sigma, straight A student, and I walked away from it when all the officers started getting shot in the very beginning. When I looked my husband in the face and I told him that there was no way that I could pull out of my driveway in that uniform not knowing if I would be able to go back home or not. Not knowing that I would live to see the end of the day because of my uniform. Now I stand above all with the officers of any form in any state, but because without law enforcement we would have total chaos and craziness. We need our officers, and we need them alive. We need them to stay alive. We need them to be able to go back home to their families, to their children. Whether they're male, female, it doesn't matter. They need to be protected by their government and if I'm going to be a part of your county, I would want to see an abundance of officers in this county. I travel Highway 13 to Fayetteville every single day to drive my disabled daughter back and forth to Fayetteville State University and there have been multiple times that I have had to call Sampson County officers to ask them was there any way that they could assist me because people were going around me on that highway head on with other vehicles at seventy plus miles an hour. I just hope y'all can realize what you're doing if you don't help these officers.

Eugene Pearsall, 10422 Faison Highway, Faison, North Carolina - Good evening. I stand before you tonight, not just as a resident, but as a business owner. I have great concerns about our safety for the community. And I also have concerns as a taxpayer that these concerns that I've heard Jimmy Thornton...I've been reading Facebook, I've been reading the paper, and it seems to have gone ignored. I hear many people saying, "Are you guys just like the people in Raleigh and Washington D.C. not listening to the voters?" Let's not let that come to our county. I also stand before you as a tax paying resident that believes that you guys support us. Not what you think, it's what we need. I'm asking. I'm begging. I'm pleading here. These deputies work hard. Mr. Causey, you guys talk about the budget and say that they should be satisfied with what they're getting, but I say here, they need more. Safety has no limits. Also Mr. Causey, you stated one good thing here. You stated that contingency funds are meant for emergencies. Okay? We have an emergency here, and I ask that one of the commissioners make a motion to declare this an emergency so we can fund our police officers. Sampson County is getting paid \$4,000 less than the Duplin County Sheriffs. So, we can do this with emergency funds. Let's declare this an emergency. I ask that of you now. We can do that. Thank you.

Charlie Hale, 27 Corinth Church Road, Salemburg, North Carolina - I'm here for the Sheriff's Department because me, personally, as a mom...I have three kids. My oldest is in middle school. I mean of course, you know, we need cops. School shootings. There's not enough officers to back them up. But just for me personally, I mean, I'm a mom, I see the news, people get kidnapped everywhere. You know, everything goes wrong. I could be at home by myself. Somebody could break in. Who knows what's going to happen? I mean, we need our officers. I mean, are we all going to have to start being cops if we only have four cops in Sampson County? That's going to be a lot of self-defense cases in courts coming up if we all have to be cops out here. Defend ourselves. I'm going to defend mine. I don't shoot a gun. Never shot a gun in my life, but you best believe when it comes to my kids it's going to be some bullets blazing. Second of all, I don't know if I'm allowed to announce it yet, but we've been working and talking with Sheriff Jimmy Thornton and all the officers coming up and Saturday,

November 12<sup>th</sup>, from 11:00-1:00, we've already applied for a permit, we're going to be doing a walk for the officers to back the blue, get the community involved, get the public involved, get our voices out, whatever we need to do. Just something just to show support for our officers. This is a time the community needs to come together to support our officers and it's going to be, so, with that being said I hope y'all change your minds. I mean, we need our cops. Thank you.

Ruth Cantrell, 235 Gilmore Lane, Clinton, North Carolina - The 9/21 meeting was about inaccuracies. Well, I watched it and there were several inaccuracies in that meeting. There was a meeting moved back last year, it was a special meeting, not the normal monthly commissioner's meeting, a lot of deputies showed up and at the last minute the location was moved and none of them were allowed to be there. You could have fixed that by simply acknowledging them. Also, um, animal control, those deputies were not pulled off the road when the Clear the Shelter event started. Those deputies were pulled off the road back the end of July, first of August to fill court vacancies that were left by retiring officers so that was inaccurate statement. They were not pulled off the road for Clear the Shelter. Now Mr. Causey said that employees of Sampson County had significant salary increases. Well Mr. Causey, from 2019-2020 year to 2022-2023 year you had a \$10,836 salary increase, which is \$903 a month. That's pretty significant. Mrs. Holder had an \$18,660 increase or \$1,555 a month. Again, that's significant. Ms. Dillman \$14,256 or \$1,188 a month. Significant. Deputy, \$5,040 or \$420 a month. A detention officer, God bless them, \$2,928 or \$244 a month. Man, that is significant. That's making a difference. I'm going to tell you right now, great job. Great job. Um, since 2014 both the County Manager and the Assistant County Manager have had raises higher than the salary that a current deputy makes, much less a detention officer, but yet many times, um, it was stated that detention jobs are very tough and not everyone can do that job. Thank you.

Bruce McLamb, 787 Old US 701 Highway, Clinton, North Carolina - I want to tell you about first responders. I am a first responder and first responders in this county includes fire department, EMS, 911 center, police department, and the Sheriff's Department. And if you call 911 you better have some trained people to tell you where to go when you have an emergency. When you have an emergency, you don't want a tax collector to be called to go there you want a sheriff's department or fire department or whoever is required to go there. My main problem is the Sheriff's Department isn't getting their due money and I feel like y'all are taking all the money from the jail and allocating it somewhere else. If the Sheriff's Department has to do that jail, has to manage it and do everything and y'all take all the money and use it somewhere else. It would be like me running an automobile shop and Friday comes and my two mechanics want to get paid and I say, "Well, I had to spend the money somewhere else, but I spent it so you can keep a job. You're working for free. That's alright." You need to at least if that jail, I don't know how much it brings in, I imagine it brings in millions of dollars, but if that jail brings in \$6 million, you need to give the Sheriff's Department half of it. Period. That's all I've got to say.

David Haney, 2980 Old Warsaw Road, Clinton, North Carolina - I'm not much of a speaker. I shoot from the hip. I'll go ahead and tell y'all what I think. After twenty-four years I retired from the fire department in Sampson County. You wouldn't believe this; we had a crack problem. And meth labs going on in Sampson County and all this. And who came and saved my butt? Mr. Jimmy Thornton did and the Sheriff's Department. I come out of that house when it was on fire. It was fixing to blow up. Mr. Jimmy Thornton and a deputy was standing there right there looking at me. Now I've got a problem. And this is something else I'm going

to say and I ain't going to say nothing else. If somebody came to your house and Mr. Jimmy had deputies in Newton Grove and in Roseboro and say he had one in say Spivey's Corner. Okay, you live in Clinton. What's the response time on Mr. Jimmy's officers getting to your house? Y'all haven't got no answer to that because you don't know. Well, if it's over two or three minutes, I'm going to take care of the problem and I'm going to dial my next-door neighbor and ask does he see anybody over there in the other yard and let him finish. And Mr. Jimmy, when you come and get me you don't need no handcuffs. I'll go willingly, but I'm going to protect my family and that's the way I look at it. I pulled twenty-four years on a fire department. I'm retired now. I ain't healthy enough to be fighting nobody. That's all I got to say. Thank you. Ma'am, you can smile all you want to, I'm sorry, I don't disrespect nobody. Okay, thank you.

Gwen Morrison, 575 John Rich Road, Warsaw, North Carolina - I used to live in Sampson County for over twenty-five years. I have a child that is in law enforcement in Sampson County, and I want to tell you that I know that when a deputy is in Roseboro, a deputy is in Newton Grove, and a deputy's down in Garland, when something happens, they can not get to each other. They can not to the call. And the reason that that is is because you guys have failed them. You have failed Sampson County. You have failed all of these citizens. I may move back to Sampson County at some point. Depends. It really depends. But what I don't understand is how y'all can take raises for yourselves, how y'all can take money from the jail, how y'all can take money from wherever its coming from, the tax coffers and say that there is not enough. I don't believe that. I just believe that your priorities are screwed. I believe that you do not care that you are so separated from us that you are making your own decisions according to what you desire, to what you think you should do, to what you think should happen. Y'all drive county cars, maybe you don't, but I'm sure you got a gas expense. But what do we have? We have Sampson County Sheriff's Department. We have fire and rescue. We have the dog catchers. They are our people. They are our children. They are our brothers and sisters. But you guys are so separated from us you have no compassion for this county and the fact that people do die of heart attacks, they die of strokes because you can't get people there to help because how many times does a deputy get there before rescue does and begin CPR? Because I know that my daughter has done CPR on so many people, but you don't care. Y'all have nice salaries and nice homes. You live in nice districts I'm sure and I know that at least one of you doesn't even live in Sampson County but you have a house here, so you use that as your reason to stay here. But that's okay. God is watching. God is watching and we're praying for our deputies, but y'all don't care and we know that and that's what we feel. That's what everybody in this room feels, that you do not care about Sampson County citizens. And I lived here for twenty-five years, and I loved this county, I didn't want to move away, but I had a stroke and I had to. I had to go live with my daughter. But y'all just don't care and that's all I got to say. Y'all just live with that. Live with these words that you hear. We feel that you do not care that y'all are flush. Y'all got your money. Y'all got your raises that you voted for each other. So be it. God is watching.

### **Closed Session - Pursuant to GS 143-318.11(a)(3), Attorney-Client Privilege**

Upon a motion made by Chairperson Lee and seconded by Vice Chairperson Kivett, the Board voted unanimously to enter into closed session pursuant to GS 143-318.11(a)(3). In closed session, Attorney Joel Starling briefed the Board on matters related to the Opioid Settlement and

other legal matters. Upon a motion by Commissioner Wooten and seconded by Chairperson Lee, the Board voted unanimously to come out of closed session. No action was taken.

**Recess to Reconvene**

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Wooten and seconded by Vice Chairperson Kivett, the Board voted unanimously to recess to reconvene on Wednesday, October 26, 2022, at 10:00 A.M. in the Administrative Board Room.

/signed copy on file in Clerk's Office

Sue L. Lee, Chairperson

/signed copy on file in Clerk's Office

Susan J. Holder, Clerk to the Board