

The Sampson County Board of Commissioners convened for their regular meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, November 7, 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 and Lethia Lee. Absent: Commissioner Clark Wooten.

Chairperson Sue Lee called the meeting to order and turned the meeting over to Vice Chairperson Kivett. Vice Chairperson Kivett called upon Assistant County Manager and Clerk to the Board Susan Holder who provided the invocation. Vice Chairperson Kivett then led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Upon a motion by Chairperson Lee and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda as published with the following changes:

- On Consent Agenda Item 4(c), corrected the date for the observance of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday from January 23, 2023, to January 16, 2023 on the 2023 County Government Holiday Schedule
- Added a Closed Session following the Public Comment section of this meeting

### **Item 1: Presentation of Recommendations for Resolution of Employee Compensation Issues**

Chairperson Lee called upon Susan Holder who made this presentation due to the County Manager's loss of voice. Mrs. Holder reviewed the memorandum regarding "Recommendations for Resolution of Employee Recruitment and Retention Challenges" as follows:

"At your planning session this past February and during our special session on September 21, 2022, staff attempted to highlight the significant and escalating challenges of employee recruitment and retention as well as the external factors and internal budgetary concerns which constrain our ability to resolve those challenges. As we have discussed, employment challenges are not limited to one department, they are not limited to one local government, and they are not limited to public versus private industry. The issues - that we are competing for a diminishing workforce of willing, able, and qualified workers, that we are experiencing a tsunami of retirement by trained, knowledgeable personnel, and that we are shifting to a generation of employees whose expectation of work environment is vastly different than how we currently operate - are pervasive. Moreover, these issues exist as we are experiencing the impact of inflation, as we face the alarming possibility of a recession, and as we struggle to keep taxes as low as possible for our citizens who are feeling those financial impacts, all without abandoning the need to prudently plan for our County's future. As a rural local government, these fiscal issues are particularly constricting to us.

At your October meeting, the Board gave us the directive to develop options for consideration 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.

Staff has spent countless hours discussing recommendations which achieve these goals and believe that we cannot fulfill the directives of the Board unless we approach our challenges holistically (by definition, in a way that deals with or treats the whole of something or someone and not just a part) and deliberately, seeking a long-term solution versus a short-term act.

We must:

1. Avoid actions which may entice new employees in the short term but serve to demoralize existing employees and accelerate the loss of trained, experienced workers. We must not exacerbate our existing challenges.
2. Avoid the impact of actions taken outside of the budget process. The Board's previous actions to respond to critical operational needs and improve compensation for our workforce outside of the regular budget process left us out of sync with other local governments' compensation decisions and rendered us less competitive in recruiting our workforce. And, while desired and appreciated by our citizens and employees, the Board's accomplishments left us with fixed increased expenditures of \$2,409,290 as we started the current year budget, without corresponding increases in revenues. To continue this trend would leave the county in dire financial straits.

Therefore, mindful of the Board's directives, we recommend the Board take the following actions which seek a long-term resolution to our challenges:

1. Immediately authorize a comprehensive market study, budgeting associated costs not to exceed \$50,000. Such study to be performed as soon as possible, with the intention of implementing study recommendations to the fullest extent within budgetary restrictions.
2. As compensation issues are being addressed, immediately research and implement operational changes which enhance our competitiveness when recruiting new employees and improve the retention of existing employees. We are now and will continue to be recruiting from a new generation that values non-traditional work schedules, hybrid/remote work opportunities, technology, and wellness as much as financial compensation. Understanding that there is not a one-size fits all solution for our recruiting challenges, we should explore utilization of these non-traditional work schedules, as well as other incentives such as additional paid holidays, career ladders, and targeted professional development, which are used by other local governments and

private industry, then monitor and evaluate them for effectiveness and inclusion in future budgets.

3. Working with our department heads who have particularly hard to fill positions, move forward expeditiously to establish apprenticeship/cadet programs which create a pipeline of trained, employable workers.

If we are to resolve our employment challenges long-term, our conversations about redefining government must begin now, and we must begin to view how we deliver our services through the lens of a changing national economy.”

## **Item 2: Public Hearings**

Public Hearing – Sampson Area Transportation Grants Chairperson Lee opened the public hearing and called upon Sampson Area Transportation Director Rosemarie Oates-Mobley who informed the Board that each year the County applies to the North Carolina Department of Transportation for Community Transportation Funding, which is used by our Sampson Area Transportation program to coordinate existing transportation programs operating in Sampson County and to provide transportation services within our communities. At the September 2022 meeting, the Board authorized Sampson Area Transportation to submit funding applications as follows:

CTP/5311 Funding (Admin Expenses)	\$285,000	Requires 15% local match of \$42,750
Capital (Vehicles, Computers)	\$250,000	Requires 20% local match of \$50,000
5310 Elderly/Disabled Services	\$40,000	Requires 50% local match (in kind) of \$20,000
<b>Total Grant Requests</b>	<b>\$575,000</b>	<b>Total Local Share \$112,750</b>

The grant match amounts will be budgeted later in the FY 23-24 Sampson Area Transportation budget. Chairperson Lee opened the floor for public comments, and hearing none she closed the public hearing. No further action was needed.

Public Hearing – Naming of Private Roads Chairperson Lee opened the public hearing and called upon Assistant County Manager Susan Holder. Ms. Holder offered the name Boyd Sutton Lane for PVT 1900-1941, as recommended by the Road Naming Committee. Chairperson Lee opened the floor for public comments and hearing none closed the public hearing. Upon a motion by Vice Chairperson Kivett and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to name the road as recommended.

Public Hearing – CDBG-NR Program Amendment Chairperson Lee opened the public hearing and called upon Finance Officer David Clack. Mr. Clack explained that the County intends to submit a program amendment to its CDBG-NR program to add one property for reconstruction and one property for rehabilitation (that meet the budget and state requirements), replacing two properties which opted out of the program. Chairperson Lee opened the floor for public comments and hearing none closed the public hearing. Upon a

motion by Vice Chairperson Kivett and seconded by Chairperson Lee, the Board voted unanimously to approve the amendment to the CDBG-NR program as recommended.

**Item 3: Action Items**

Award of Bid for Reconstruction of Two Homes in the CDBG-NR Program Chairperson Lee called upon Finance Officer David Clack who informed the Board that the County advertised bids for two homes in the 2020 Sampson County CDBG-NR Program. The bids were opened and read aloud on October 31, 2022. The Adams Company, the grant administrators, reviewed the bids and provided a Bid Tabulation Summary. Upon a motion by Vice Chairperson Kivett and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to award Contract William Simmons to the lowest responsible bidder, Holland Construction Co. (Owner Thomas J. Holland) at the bid price of \$160,500 as recommended by The Adams Company. (The second bid will be considered for award at the December meeting.)

Award of Bid for Construction of Clement Area Water Main Project Chairperson Lee called upon Public Works Director Lin Reynolds who introduced engineer David Ross. Mr. Ross informed the Board that the County advertised for bids for the construction of the Clement Area Water Main Project, with a bid opening on November 3, 2022. Dewberry Engineers reviewed the bids and provided a Bid Tabulation Summary. Upon a motion by Chairperson Lee and seconded by Vice Chairperson Kivett, the Board voted unanimously to award the bid for construction of the Clement Area Water Main Project, as recommended by Dewberry Engineers, to the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, Herring-Rivenbark, Inc., based upon the lowest cost alternate, Schedule A and Alternate A at a rate of \$1,378,670, contingent upon subsequent NCDWI approval.

**Item 4: Consent Agenda**

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

- a. Approved the minutes of the October 3, 2022 and October 26, 2022 meetings
- b. Adopted the Resolution Supporting Operation Green Light for Veterans (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_.)
- c. Adopted the 2023 County Government Holiday Schedule (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_.)
- d. Adopted the 2023 Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_.)
- e. Approved the Sampson County Public Library request to discard certain items weeded from collection from August 31, 2022-October 25, 2022, and other donated items

pursuant to Collection Development Policy

- f. Adopted a resolution approving the purchase of an approximately 0.63-acre parcel of real property for airport use from Willie L. Rackley and wife, Yvonne S. Rackley (cost of purchase to be shared with City of Clinton) and authorizing the execution of the contract of sale (Copies filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_.)
- g. Approved ARPA project financial policies: Records Retention Policy, Eligible Use Policy, UG Cost Principals Policy, Nondiscrimination Policy, and Conflicts of Interest and Gifts Policy (Copies filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_, Pages \_\_\_\_.)
- h. Approved late disabled veterans tax exclusion requests for Nickie Smith, Robert Flynn Hollingsworth, and Darrell Wrampe
- i. Approved the tax refunds and releases as submitted

#10038	Johnny Foss	\$173.90
#10035	Joseph Alvin Pope	\$731.84
#10037	Lisa Coleman Williams	\$235.31
#10036	Devan Nicole Avery	\$381.63
#10018	Prestage Farms Inc.	\$176.90
#10031	Frances Marshall	\$106.44
#10009	Jeffrey Scott Smith	\$727.41
#10008	Larry Deleon Pope	\$255.84
#09998	Lloyd Gordon Brown	\$416.25
#10028	Michael Jones	\$416.25
#10000	Nathan Troy McKee	\$481.50
#10027	Deborah Ann Averitt	\$225.46
Tax Release	Bettie Williams	\$193.47
Tax Release	Jonathan Hall	\$267.76
Tax Release	Cape Fear Service Center Inc.	\$108.61
Tax Release	Francisco Delgado	\$629.29
Tax Release	Spectrum Southeast LLC	\$469.46
Tax Release	Spectrum Southeast LLC	\$1,286.15
Tax Release	Spectrum Southeast LLC	\$2,684.92

- j. Approved the budget amendments as submitted

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		Sampson County Schools Capital Outlay	
<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11659140	555030 Category 1 Capital Outlay	\$1,678,320.	
11659140	555031 Category 2 Capital Outlay	\$38,493.	
11659140	555032 Category 3 Capital Outlay	\$209,552.	
11659140	550000 Unallocated Funds		\$1,039,110.
19959140	582096 Transfer to General Fund	\$887,255.	

**REVENUE**

<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
19932320	409900 Fund Balance Appropriated	\$887,255.	
11035914	409612 Transfer from School Capital Reserve	\$887,255.	

**EXPENDITURE**

<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11243300	526201 Department Supplies - Equipment	\$3,691.	

**REVENUE**

<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11034330	408406 Other Grants	\$3,691.	

**EXPENDITURE**

<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11761100	526200 Department Supplies		\$2,808.

**REVENUE**

<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11036110	403625 Correction as NC Bright Ideas Grant purchases less than expected		\$2,808.

**EXPENDITURE**

<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11761100	531100 Department Supplies	\$3,000.	

**REVENUE**

<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11036110	408900 Dollar General Literacy Grant	\$3,000.	

**EXPENDITURE**

<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11761100	531100 Department Supplies	\$22.	

**REVENUE**

<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11036110	403625 Additional amount being reimbursed by ASRL Scholarship	\$22.	

**EXPENDITURE**

<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11243100	544000 Contracted Services	\$3,598.	
11999000	509700 Contingency		\$3,598.

**REVENUE**

<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>

**EXPENDITURE**

<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
62998610	522102 Beer & Wine	\$6,500.	

**REVENUE**

<u>Code Number</u>	<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
62939861	404010 Bar Sales	\$6,500.	

**Item 5: Consideration of Tax Appeal (Lamb Farms)**

Assistant County Manager Susan Holder reviewed a request by Lamb Farms to adjust the penalties applied to their business personal property tax account for failure to timely list assets. Upon a motion by Chairperson Lee and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to reduce the penalty by one-half.

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

No report was given.

**Item 7: Public Comment Period**

Chairperson Lee opened the floor for public comments. The following were received:

Wayne High, 1235 Timberlake Drive, Clinton, NC - I wanted to talk about Item F on the consent agenda which first came to my knowledge on the agenda for the meeting of September 12 when it was recommended that we transfer the equivalent of \$210,000 plus closing costs, less the city's contribution to buy a little postage stamp of land at the airport. If we look at that, the amount of purchase for that land is \$210,000 for shade over half an acre. If we equate that to what you all just paid for the land at Newton Grove, that mean an equivalent of \$66,000,000 to buy that land in Newton Grove is what you're willing to pay for this half an acre. Nowhere in this meeting does it say that you're going to spend \$200,000. In that I couldn't find a posted agenda for this meeting, I'm coming off the cuff a little bit that I can't understand. It's bad enough that we spent \$17,000 an acre to buy the original 10-acres of a "air park" which didn't have anything but weeds, but now all of a sudden we're going to spend \$233,000, \$333,000 equivalent, to buy .63 of an acre. I've got to believe that there's something going on, ladies and gentlemen, that you all aren't telling the taxpayers. I don't know if there's any land in this county worth \$300,000 an acre. It hurts me that we don't put any information out to the public on things like this. First of all, it shouldn't be in the consent agenda anyway if you read the rules for the consent agenda. That's another subject. So, I just want taxpayers to understand how much money you're willing to spend at the airport on top of the hundred and seventy some thousand, excuse me, we spent a couple years ago to buy 10 acres. Now we're going to spend the equivalent of \$300,000 to buy half an acre. This is revolting. I don't understand it and you all should give us an explanation of why you are willing to approve, or you already have approved it, I'm not sure it should have, excuse me I've got a cold, it should have had a public hearing, but that's neither here nor there, that's for Mr. Starling to determine. I just find it totally unacceptable, and I've got a feeling taxpayers are getting shafted. Thank you.

**Closed Session - Pursuant to GS 143-318.11(a)(6), Personnel Matters**

Upon a motion made by Chairperson Lee and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to enter into Closed Session pursuant to GS 143-318.11(a)(6). In closed session, the Board discussed a request by the County Attorney to reconstitute his employment status to contracted services. Upon a motion by Chairperson Lee and seconded by Vice Chairperson Kivett, the Board voted unanimously to come out of Closed Session. Upon a motion by Chairperson Lee and seconded by Vice Chairperson Kivett, the Board voted

unanimously to reconstitute the employment status of the County Attorney to contracted services and authorize the County Manager to enter into a contract not to exceed \$150/hour (to be effective December 1, 2022).

### **Adjournment**

Upon a motion made by Vice Chairperson Kivett and seconded by Chairperson Lee, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn.

/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