



Chatham County, NC

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Tuesday, January 12, 2021

9:00 AM

Agriculture & Conference Center

Board of Commissioners Retreat

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Dasher called the meeting to order at 9:04 am.

Present: 5 - Chair Mike Dasher, Vice Chair Diana Hales, Commissioner Franklin Gomez Flores, Commissioner Jim Crawford and Commissioner Karen Howard

BOARD PRIORITIES

[21-3717](#)

Chatham County Schools

Attachments: [2021-2022 Heads Up Presentation for BOC Retreat 1.12.2021](#)

Interim Superintendent Dr. Randy Bridges introduced himself and commended the county on its strong relationship with the School Board.

Chief Financial Officer Tony Messer and Assistant Superintendent of Operations Chris Blice gave a presentation to the Board.

Commissioner Crawford asked if unspent money can carry over to the next year. Mr. Messer stated that the unspent money goes back into the fund balance and gets reallocated.

Commissioner Crawford asked if Commissioners would have the opportunity to tour the new Seaforth High School. Mr. Blice stated that would be possible while keeping groups small in light of COVID.

Vice Chair Hales asked if the school's on-site wastewater was approved. Mr. Blice stated that it has been approved and has been put in place. Vice Chair Hales is very excited about the school opening. Mr. Messer said it will be the first new high school built since 1972.

Chair Dasher asked if the Seaforth district has been finalized. Mr. Blice stated it has been finalized and made public. Chair Dasher asked whether they considered income distribution when drawing the district. Mr. Blice stated that income distribution did factor into the drawing of the district.

Commissioner Crawford asked how to get more children to ride the bus in the post-COVID world. Mr. Blice stated that the buses they run are full and that riding the bus is a much safer option for students than riding in cars.

[21-3718](#)

Boards and Commissions Expectations Discussion

Attachments: [Roles & Expectations for FY2022 \(2\)](#)

County Manager Dan LaMontagne introduced the reasons behind the exercise. Management Analyst Courtney Cooper-Lewter facilitated the exercise. Mr. LaMontagne pointed out that two categories were added, Attorney and Clerk expectations of the Board. The final document is attached.

[21-3719](#)

Farmland Preservation Plan Update

Attachments: [ChathamFarmlandPreservatio.pdf](#)

Cooperative Extension Director Ginger Cunningham gave a presentation to the Board.

Commissioner Hales asked if other relevant committees would be consulted when creating a scoping document of their work. Ms. Cunningham stated that many entities in the county, including relevant committees will be involved in creating the document.

Commissioner Crawford asked about how to preserve farmland in the county when fewer people are becoming farmers. Ms. Cunningham stated they are working internally to educate the next generation of farmers and working to create a farmer portal to assist farmers.

[21-3720](#)

Revaluation Update

Attachments: [Chatham County Reappraisal Presentation.pptx](#)

Tax Administrator Jenny Williams and Contractor Ryan Vincent gave a presentation to the Board.

Vice Chair Hales asked whether the involvement of a realtor determines whether a transaction was valid or invalid. Mr. Vincent stated a realtor does not necessarily have to be involved for a transaction to be valid.

Vice Chair Hales asked what they do if they cannot access the property. Mr. Vincent stated they deal with that issue frequently. They first make a note on the record that they could not access the property in case there is an appeal. They also use a product called Pictometry to take high definition images of the property from multiple angles.

Vice Chair Hales noted that many residents of Goldston felt their properties were valued too highly after the last revaluation. She wondered how that would affect revaluations this time. Mr. Vincent stated that prior appraisals do not affect the new appraisal.

Commissioner Gomez Flores asked if demographics are considered during reappraisal. Mr. Vincent stated they do not look at demographics.

[21-3721](#)

HR Presentation Pay/Benefits

Attachments: [PayandBenefitsUpdate.pdf](#)

Human Resources Director Carolyn Miller gave a presentation to the Board.

Commissioner Crawford asked if average tenure with the County included the Sheriff's Office. Ms. Miller stated that it includes everyone who works for the county, including the Sheriff's Office.

Vice Chair Hales asked if every rank in the Sheriff's Office was included in the pay study. Ms. Miller stated they were.

Commissioner Crawford asked if the pay study will capture employees who regularly take on more tasks and responsibilities than required of their position. Ms. Miller stated that is examined in the budget reclassification process.

Vice Chair Hales asked what the county does about high-performing employees who are not suited for supervisory roles. Ms. Miller stated there are sometimes distinctions within occupations such as Planner I and Planner II.

Commissioner Crawford asked if the county is able to hire good candidates into a higher class than the position advertised. Ms. Miller stated that the Board has given the county flexibility in how they hire and in changing positions as needed.

Chair Dasher asked how long the pay study results will take to implement. Ms. Miller stated it is hard to determine how long it will take without first having the results of the study.

Chair Dasher asked if there is room for improvement in the county's family leave policy. Ms. Miller stated there is room for discussion around the family leave policy, including looking to solutions like more remote work.

Vice Chair Hales asked whether the county has considered providing day care for employees' children. Ms. Miller stated it was examined years ago and found to be cost prohibitive, but it is something they can look into again.

[21-3722](#)

Current Year Accomplishments

Attachments: [FY 2021 Mid-Year Accomplishments.pptx](#)

County Manager Dan LaMontagne reviewed current year accomplishments.

Vice Chair Hales asked if there were any reported issues with the new voting equipment during the elections. Mr. LaMontagne stated there were not.

Vice Chair Hales asked how the 3% fee charged by credit card companies is addressed for online tax payments. Finance Director Vicki McConnell stated the fee is paid by residents but they also have the option of paying by check online, which has no fee.

[21-3723](#)

Expected Conditions Affecting Next Year's Budget

Attachments: [Expected Conditions FY22 Budget](#)

Budget Director Darrell Butts gave a presentation to the Board.

Commissioner Hales asked what the growth was last year. Mr. Butts stated they projected a growth of 3% and the actual growth was about 4%.

Commissioner Crawford asked who is responsible for building the new EMS base. Mr. LaMontagne stated the County is. He also stated that FirstHealth will not be charged to use the facility because the county is paying them for the service.

21-3724

Commissioner Discussion of Goals and Priorities

Vice Chair Hales is interested in funding for Farmland Preservation. Mr. LaMontagne stated they are trying to get a plan together before setting up a fund. Mr. Thompson stated he would follow up with Ginger Cunningham and provide an update. Commissioner Dasher stated the Board believes getting the Farmland Preservation Plan done is a priority and Article 46 money could be used for initial funding. This year, Article 46 will be used for teacher supplements first. Darrell Butts stated they are expecting \$1.5 million in that fund next year.

Vice Chair Hales mentioned she is interested in solar field decommissioning and what it would mean for farmers. Mr. LaMontagne stated that ERAC is looking into that issue.

Commissioner Gomez Flores stated he is interested helping families in Chatham County and ensuring minority communities are not preyed upon for their assets. Commissioner Gomez Flores also mentioned ensuring the county considers language barriers in its interactions with residents, both language spoken and terminology used. He suggested hiring translators when a language spoken reaches a certain threshold in the county. He would also like the county to revisit impact fees and their effect on the western part of the county. Vice Chair Hales asked if impact fees can be used for school renovations. Ms. McConnell stated they can.

Chair Dasher mentioned his desire to speed up the Unified Development Ordinance. Mr. LaMontagne stated they are about two months behind with the UDO. Chair Dasher also mentioned monitoring fuel use to understand fleet mileage with the goal of electrifying the fleet. Mr. LaMontagne stated he has been looking into that issue but some fleet vehicles would not be feasible as electric. Chair Dasher stated he would like to see the county set a goal for average miles per gallon for the county fleet. Chair Dasher asked about solar generation at county facilities on Renaissance Drive. Mr. LaMontagne stated he is looking into the financial implications that would have for the county. Chair Dasher stated that the county had committed to zero emissions by 2050 and they should revisit that.

Commissioner Gomez Flores mentioned he would like to see something around buy Chatham, hire Chatham.

Commissioner Crawford asked about the process for renaming 15-501 corridor heading into Pittsboro. Mr. LaMontagne stated the corridor was never named so they are examining the process. He said he believed the State Board of Transportation was responsible for choosing a name. Commissioner Crawford stated he would be interested in naming it Horton Way.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Gomez Flores, seconded by Commissioner Crawford, that this meeting be adjourned. The motion carried by the following vote:

Aye: 5 - Chair Dasher, Vice Chair Hales, Commissioner Gomez Flores, Commissioner Crawford and Commissioner Howard