

March 19, 2012 7:00 P.M.

JONES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

REGULAR MEETING

JONES COUNTY OFFICE COMPLEX – COMMISSIONERS’ ROOM

MINUTES

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

Zack Koonce, Chairman
Frank Emory, Vice-Chairman
Sondra Ipock-Riggs, Commissioner
Joe Wiggins, Commissioner
Mike Haddock, Commissioner

OFFICIALS PRESENT:

Franky J. Howard, County Manager
Jennifer King, Clerk to the Board
Jimmie B. Hicks, County Attorney

The Chairman called the meeting to order and gave the invocation. A **MOTION** was made by Joe Wiggins, seconded by Mike Haddock, and unanimously carried **THAT** the agenda be approved as presented.

MOTION made by Frank Emory, seconded by Mike Haddock, and unanimously carried **THAT** the minutes of March 5, 2012, be approved.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

James Gutai discussed the puppy mill case in which a Jones County residence was found to be harboring over 80 dogs. The owners were charged with multiple counts of animal cruelty. Mr. Gutai explained that Jones County was one of the only County’s in the State that did not have an ordinance to limit the number of dogs a citizen can keep. Mr. Gutai suggested that the County consider such an ordinance in order to avoid giving the impression that we condone this type of behavior.

Wilbur Parker spoke to the Board concerning the recent issue concerning prayer in the Jones County Commissioners’ Meetings. Mr. Parker believes our rights are being infringed upon and a judge should not be allowed to tell people they can’t pray. He believes that the Board should pray to God, not nonsectarian. Mr. Parker stated that Jones County is a blessed county and we need to pray to God for continued blessings. Mr. Parker stated if there is one commissioner that wants to pray then it should be okay to pray.

Debbie Metts explained that she understands the ACLU has challenged counties and taken them to court over prayer. She is not sure how they have the authority to tell counties what to do. Mrs. Metts would like to be able to vote by referendum on the topic of prayer in the Jones County Board of Commissioners’ meetings. Mrs. Metts stated that her family is a big voting block and they aren’t ashamed to pray in Jesus’ name. She stated that since prayer was taken out of the schools teen pregnancy and other issues have increased. Mrs. Metts asked what would the County do if the courts tell us we can no longer pledge allegiance to God.

Russell Metts stated that the Board should have the right to pray in Jesus' name. He stated that the biggest document is the constitution that begins with "we the people". He stated that the Commissioners are here to serve the County and shouldn't do things that the citizens don't agree with. He stated the Commissioners should make a stand like Ed Brown did in Onslow County. He would like for Danny Heath to be sent to conferences that would teach him what rights he has as the Sheriff in instances such as this.

Joey Collins expressed his agreement with the comments that were already made concerning prayer. He stated that the County was being railroaded and the Liberties Christian Association would fight for the County in the name of Jesus. He stated that we should let the high Sheriff take control over this issue.

Danny Heath, Sheriff, spoke concerning prayer. Sheriff Heath stated that he believes what you profess with your lips you best believe in your heart. He will not shy away from prayer because of a threat. Sheriff Heath stated that there is a time and place to take a stand. Sheriff Heath stated if we turn our back on the Lord he will turn his back on us. Mr. Heath stated that he has probably worked two-years worth in the last year to clean up the County.

Franky Howard, County Manager, explained that the Board is operating based on the recommendations of the County Attorney in holding a nonsectarian prayer at the beginning of the Board meetings. This recommendation has come after our County Attorney, Jimmie Hicks, was made aware by the ACLU that a citizen had complained about prayer in the Jones County Board of Commissioners' meeting. Forsyth County recently lost a similar case and it cost them in excess of \$500,000 due this issue. Mr. Howard and Danny Heath agreed to work on this matter jointly.

Phil Moore expressed his concerns over the prayer issue. Mr. Moore stated that we shouldn't step back and allow one person other than Jesus to rule this County or we are headed in the wrong direction. He stated we should be a County that shines for Jesus and we are going to fight.

Tommy Williams stated it appears the Board is headed in the right direction. He stated if we stand up for God he will be there if we were to fight a suit in court concerning prayer. He stated we should set a precedence for other counties around us.

1. TRENTON VOLUNTEER FIRE & EMS – 2010-2011 CAPITAL REQUEST

MOTION made by Sondra Ipock-Riggs, seconded by Joe Wiggins, and unanimously carried **THAT** the request from Trenton Volunteer Fire & EMS for 2010-2011 capital funds in the amount of \$10,741 for fire and \$10,741 for EMS be approved. The department failed to request these funds in the 2010-2011 budget year.

2. CAPITAL REQUEST – SHERIFF - TASER

The Sheriff's Department requested to purchase one taser to replace a malfunctioning taser. The repair for the malfunctioning taser would cost in excess of \$800 while a new taser can be purchased for approximately \$950. The Board asked Danny Heath, Sheriff,

how many tasers his department needs at the present time. Sheriff Heath explained that six tasers were needed. Melissa Moore-Freeman, Finance Officer, was asked if funds were available in the Capital Account to cover this purchase. Mrs. Moore-Freeman explained that the Capital Account has no funds remaining and this purchase would have to be funded through fund balance, if approved. **MOTION** made by Sondra Ipock-Riggs, seconded by Frank Emory, and unanimously carried **THAT** the purchase of six tasers at a cost of approximately \$5,700 for the Sheriff's Department be approved using Fund Balance.

3. TAX REFUND

MOTION made by Sondra Ipock-Riggs, seconded by Joe Wiggins, and unanimously carried **THAT** a tax refund in the amount of \$20 for Glenda Strayhorn Howard be approved. The refund is due to a \$20 fee being charged twice, in error.

4. TAX COLLECTIONS REPORT – FEBRUARY

The February Tax Collections Report was presented to the Board showing a total collection of \$4,818,582.55 (90.37%).

5. ABC PERMIT

Information was presented to the Board regarding an ABC Permit Application received from Mary and William Pelham. Some discussion was held concerning the location of the B&M General Store owned by Mr. and Mrs. Pelham.

MOTION made by Joe Wiggins, seconded by Frank Emory, and carried **THAT** this item be **TABLED** until further information can be obtained on the location of B&M General Store.

6. DEBT SETOFF REFUNDS

MOTION made by Joe Wiggins, seconded by Frank Emory, and unanimously carried **THAT** debt setoff refunds be approved as presented. A copy of the refunds is marked Exhibit A and is hereby incorporated by reference and made a part of these minutes.

7. JONES COUNTY FARM BUREAU GRAND OPENING

Franky Howard, County Manager, informed the Board that the Jones County Farm Bureau Grand Opening for their new location on Industrial Park Drive will be held March 20, 2012, from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

8. NACO ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The Board discussed the upcoming NACO (National Association of Counties) Annual Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Board requested a copy of the conference agenda prior to making a decision on whether to attend this meeting.

9. CLOSED SESSION UNDER NCGS 143-318.11(a)(4)

MOTION made by Sondra Ipock-Riggs, seconded by Joe Wiggins, and unanimously carried **THAT** the Board go into Closed Session.

MOTION made by Mike Haddock, seconded by Frank Emory, and unanimously carried **THAT** the Board go out of Closed Session.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

Franky Howard informed the Board that we have received a radio grant for more than \$300,000 thanks to the hard work of our EMS Director, Timmy Pike.

Larry Meadows distributed a copy of the NC Eastern Region Development Review Book. Mr. Meadows requested approval to submit information on TC2, South Tech, and DHi to be included in the next edition of this book. **MOTION** made by Sondra Ipock-Riggs, seconded by Joe Wiggins, and unanimously carried **THAT** TC2, South Tech, and DHi be advertised in the NC Eastern Region Development Review book at a cost of \$5,130 using Revolving Loan Funds.

Mr. Meadows discussed the TC2 project with the Board. **MOTION** made by Mike Haddock, seconded by Sondra Ipock-Riggs, and unanimously carried **THAT** an additional \$21,000 be put in an escrow account during the construction phase of the TC2 project using Revolving Loan Funds. These funds will revert back to the revolving loan fund after construction is complete and are in addition to the \$100,000 approved at a prior meeting.

A discussion was held concerning the Green Recycling Center in Maysville. **MOTION** made by Mike Haddock, seconded by Frank Emory, and unanimously carried **THAT** the County proceed with applying for a flex grant in the amount of \$50,000 for the road leading into the Green Recycling Center.

Mr. Howard informed the Board that the *Down Home Country* show will be here in September for the Heritage Festival activities. The Tac 9 television show will be filming in the County. **MOTION** made by Frank Emory, seconded by Mike Haddock, and unanimously carried **THAT** the County sponsor this event in the amount of \$1,000 using Revolving Loan Funds. The charge for admission for the night show will offset the cost of the sponsorship.

Mr. Howard informed the Board that the Cooperative Extension will be using some land next to the Office Complex for a community garden. There are plans to restore the tobacco barn in order to facilitate learning in regards to gardening.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORTS

Sondra Ipock-Riggs –

Mrs. Ipock-Riggs would really like for the Board to think about their consolidation with Lenoir County. She is concerned with the County funding a project in Lenoir but not having control over the operations of the communications center.

Zack Koonce –

Mr. Koonce stated that there was good attendance at the Elected Officials Assembly Day.

MOTION made by Mike Haddock, seconded by Frank Emory, and unanimously carried
THAT the meeting be adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Zack Koonce
Chairman

Jennifer King
Clerk to the Board

EXHIBIT A

DEBT SETOFF REFUND REPORT 03/12/2012

NAME	ADDRESS	AMOUNT	ACCOUNT #
Alicia Marie Beck	709 Foy Ave. Maysville, NC 28555	\$133.20	31740
Linda Brown	129 Tyndall Lane Maysville, NC 28555	\$91.06	18407/30164
Julie Mercer	3299 Ten Mile Fork Rd. Trenton, NC 28585	\$5.79	27823
Jimmy Moody	122 Ryan Lane Kinston, NC 28501	\$74.30	18533
Tena Tucker	PO Box 443 Trenton, NC 28585	\$97.79	14701
	Total Refunds for Tax Dept.	\$402.14	