

**MINUTES OF BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'
REGULAR MEETING OF AUGUST 4, 2020 AT 5 P.M.**

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met in regular session on August 4, 2020, in the Commission Chambers, 200 College Street, Room 326 in downtown Asheville, North Carolina at 5 p.m. where and when the following business was transacted:

The Chairman called the meeting to order with the following members present:

Brownie Newman, Chairman
Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, Commissioner
Joe Belcher, Commissioner
Amanda Edwards, Commissioner
Anthony Penland, Commissioner
Robert Pressley, Vice Chair
Al Whitesides, Commissioner

Staff present: Avril Pinder, County Manager; Sybil Tate, Assistant County Manager; Dakisha Wesley, Assistant County Manager; Donald Warn, Finance Director; Sharon Burke, Human Resources Director; Jennifer Pike, Tax Collector; Keith Miller, Tax Assessor; Stoney Blevins, Health and Human Services Director; Jim Blanton, Library Director; Rachael Nygaard, Strategic Partnerships Director; Tim Love, Business Officer; Lamar Joyner, Clerk to the Board; Brandon Freeman, Staff Attorney; Heather Hockaday, Attorney

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION

The Chairman requested a moment of silence for the individuals in the County that lost their lives due to COVID-19 virus.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Belcher motioned to approve the Consent Agenda as presented and add **Public Comment Discussion to New Business**. Vice Chair Pressley seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- Approval of July 21, 2020 Briefing Minutes
- Approval of July 21, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes
- Resolution Awarding a Service Firearm to a Retiring Deputy of the Buncombe County Sheriff's Department
 - John Elkins
- Tax Collection Report
- Revised General Fund Balance Policy for Adoption
 - Policy

GOOD NEWS

Commissioner Edwards congratulated and introduced Alex Rapetski, Troop 61 Scouts BSA. He is currently working towards his Eagle Scout rank. He listened to the Board debate their points to assist in receiving his communications badge.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

Avril Pinder, County Manager, introduced and welcomed the newly hired Health Director, Stacie Saunders and Communication & Public Engagement Director, Lillian Govus.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Public Comment Discussion**

The Board discussed allowing in-person public comments and other possible ways to conduct the public comment part of the meeting. They asked county staff to prepare a possible plan to conduct public comment differently.

- **Annual Tax Collection Settlement**

Jennifer Pike, Tax Collector, provided to the Board of Commissioners, an annual settlement of property tax collected in the previous fiscal year. She gave a summary of the net tax levy, collections, unpaid property taxes, and uncollectible taxes.

Commissioner Whitesides moved to approve the annual settlement. Commissioner Edwards seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Order of Collection to Tax Collector for 2020 Tax Year**

Jennifer Pike, Tax Collector, requested that the Board adopt the order of collection to grant her the authority to collect taxes for 2020.

Commissioner Penland moved to approve adoption of order of collection. Commissioner Beach-Ferrara seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Schedule of Values for Reappraisal 2021**

Keith Miller, Tax Assessor, summarized the schedule of values and requested the Board take the necessary steps for adoption.

Commissioner Beach-Ferrara moved to conduct a public hearing during the regular meeting on August 18, 2020 and to advertise the public hearing. Commissioner Whitesides seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Farmland Preservation Plan Adoption**

Ariel Zijp, Farmland Preservation Coordinator, discussed the plan that includes statistical analysis of agriculture changes and recommendations on how to continue to prioritize the farmland and agricultural community. She introduced a video that provided local farmers' input on the need for such a plan.

Smithson Mills, consultant, expressed that the goals are to implement projects that reduce loss of farmland, and support projects that increase economic viability of farming.

Commissioner Belcher moved to adopt the plan update. Commissioner Edwards seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Resolution Supporting Blue Ridge Road Interchange, Project I-4409**

Tim Love, Business Officer, explained proposed construction will ease traffic flow and provide additional access to businesses in the surrounding areas.

Commissioner Beach-Ferrara moved to approve the resolution as presented. Commissioner Penland seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Resolution Declaring Racism a Public Health and Safety Crisis in Buncombe County**

DK Wesley, Assistant County Manager, gave background about the resolution and stated that the Health & Human Services Board and the Justice Resource Advisory Council have worked to review and evaluate the racial disparity data in both the areas of public health and criminal justice. Information on public health outcomes, opportunities for equity, criminal justice reform and reparations was shared. She thanked the staff and stated that this is an important step forward.

Commissioner Belcher moved to approve the resolution as presented. Commissioner Penland seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Establish Capital Project Fund for Solar**

John Hudson, Budget Department, explained the ordinance.

Commissioner Edwards moved to approve the ordinance that establishes the associated capital project and budget. Commissioner Whitesides seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Budget Amendment for Coronavirus Relief Funds**

After conversation initiated by Commissioner Penland with the other Board members about his conflict of interest, due to fire districts receiving federal relief funds, Attorney Heather Hockaday provided guidance for recusal. Chairman Newman moved to recuse Commissioner Penland from discussion and voting on this agenda item. Commissioner Belcher seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

John Hudson, Budget Department, explained the two budget amendments.

Vice Chair Pressley moved to approve the two budget amendments as presented. Commissioner Belcher seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Budget Amendment for Dogwood Health Trust-Census Incentives**

Tim Love, Business Officer, explained the budget amendment.

Commissioner Beach-Ferrara moved to approve the grant and budget amendment as presented. Commissioner Penland seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Resolution to Support Community Reparations for Black People in Buncombe County**

Commissioner Beach-Ferrara introduced and gave an overview of the resolution that included her reasons for the importance of this initial step. Each commissioner weighed in on the topic and expressed their feelings towards the resolution and reparations. Experiences had by some of the commissioners were shared in heartfelt details.

Commissioner Whitesides moved to approve the resolution as presented. Commissioner Edwards seconded and the motion passed 4-3. (NOES-Penland, Pressley, Belcher)

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Commissioner Belcher moved to appoint **Max Queen, Himanshu Karvir** and **Nian Avery** to the **AB Tech Board of Trustees**. Commissioner Penland seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Chairman Newman moved to appoint **Jill Banks** and **Shannon Boyd** to the **Juvenile Crime Prevention Council**. Commissioner Beach-Ferrara seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Beach-Ferrara moved to appoint **Robert Thomas, Joseph Hackett** and **Sarah Frick** (alternate) to the **Justice Resource Advisory Council**. Commissioner Penland seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Chairman Newman moved to appoint **David King, Carmen Ramos Kennedy, Esi Hutchinson, Katherin Calhoun Cutshall, Ben Scales, Elizabeth Harper, Dennis Fagnant, Jr.** (1st alternate) and **Andrea Olson** (2nd alternate) to the **Vance Monument Task Force**. Commissioner Belcher seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

The Board agreed to interview for the Library Board and County Board of Adjustment.

PUBLIC COMMENT

The Commissioners read the public comments that were sent in electronically. (Comments are attached to packet)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- *August 18 @ 3 p.m. - Commissioners' Briefing at 200 College Street, Room 326 in downtown Asheville.*
- *August 18 @ 5 p.m. - Commissioners' Regular Meeting at 200 College Street, Room 326 in downtown Asheville.*

Commissioner Belcher moved to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a) (6) for a personnel matter with no possible action anticipated following the closed session. Commissioner Whitesides seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

CLOSED SESSION

The Board heard the update and had discussion regarding the previously mentioned personnel matter. No action was taken.

Vice Chair Pressley moved to go back into open session. Commissioner Belcher seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Penland moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chair Pressley seconded and the motion passed 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

LAMAR JOYNER, CLERK
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BROWNIE NEWMAN, CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS