

**MINUTES OF BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'
REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 7, 2017 AT 5 P.M.**

BE IT REMEMBERED: That the Board of Commissioners met in regular session on March 7, 2017, 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
Ellen Frost, Vice Chair (by phone)
Joe Belcher, Commissioner
Mike Fryar, Commissioner
Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, Commissioner
Robert Pressley, Commissioner
Al Whitesides, Commissioner

Staff present: Wanda Greene, County Manager; Jon Creighton; Assistant County Manager/Planning Director; Robert Deutsch, County Attorney; Kathy Hughes, Clerk to the Board.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

INVOCATION

The Chairman expressed support for all people and the diversity of our community in light of recent acts of hate across the nation.

In accordance with the Commissioners' code of ethics, the Chairman announced that there would be no conflict of interest caused by the companies that he works with in his solar business as they would not be involved with the solar farm to be discussed as part of the agenda. The County Attorney agreed that there was no conflict of interest.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Keith Thompson from Black Mountain thanked the Board for working together respectfully saying that he was proud of their addressing job creation and clean air and clean water. He said that he served on the County's Energy Commission thirty five years ago and was proud of their accomplishments.

Phyllis Utley thanked the Board for their service asking for more public forums to discuss equity and revitalization.

Catherine Ball spoke regarding the Equal Rights Act asking that the Commissioners request that Congress ratify the Act. She said that 36 states had already passed the bill asking for this ratification. She wanted protection for women under the law.

Tyler Garrison spoke in favor of the environmental and climate change programs and was in favor of a plan for 100 percent renewables.

Michele Pace Wood said that she did not want AB Tech to sell the old Enka property and if they did, the money was required to be used in the Enka community.

Lisa Baldwin questioned the use of grant funds that had already been received to address the school lighting project. She questioned if the light output of the new bulbs would be bright enough for the students. She asked that the Commissioners review the declining public school enrollment and wanted lottery classroom dollars to be spent on things other than lighting.

Jerry Rice thanked the Board for investigating AB Tech. He wanted the county and city school budgets to be investigated as well. He said that the Council of Independent Business Owners (CIBO) had intervened and he did not want them to be involved in County business.

Mike Plemmons with CIBO said that the organization had an open meeting regarding the AB Tech Capital Plan but had nothing to do with removing the AB Tech issue from the agenda.

CONSENT AGENDA

The County Manager said that the Usage Agreement for the Warren Wilson College Pool was drafted as requested by the Board at the last meeting. She reviewed the agreement and the fact that the County's funds would be last in. Commissioner Belcher said that this was an investment in and benefit for the community.

Commissioner Fryar moved to approve the consent agenda. Commissioner Belcher seconded the motion and it passed 7-0.

- **Approval of the Minutes of the February 21, 2017 Meeting**
- **Approval of Audit Contract with Guild Killian CPA Group**
- **Release Report**

- **Approval of Tourism Development Tax Penalty Waiver**
- **Warren Wilson College Pool Funding Usage Agreement**
- **Designation of Fire Agent for Emergency Management Assistance Grant**
- **Grant Projects Ordinance**
- **Budget Amendments:**
 - Fund 30 – Transportation**
 - Fund 10 – LIEP Project**
 - Fund 70 – Sheriff Forfeitures – BCAT**
 - Fund 71 – Sheriff Forfeitures – Federal**
 - Fund 78 – Sheriff Forfeitures - State**
- **Resolution Supporting the Adoption of a Voluntary On-Bill Energy Efficiency Finance Program**

GOOD NEWS

- **Proclamation of Agriculture Awareness Day**

Commissioner Belcher read the proclamation and moved for its approval. Commissioner Whitesides seconded and the motion passed 7-0. Jessica Gillespie, speaking on behalf of Farm Bureau, thanked the Board for declaring Ag Awareness Day on March 21. She said that Asheville's restaurants advertise locally grown foods and that is a testament to the great farmers in our County. She thanked the Board for the value added tax assessments that help farmers keep their land.

PUBLIC HEARING

- **Rezoning Request for Oak Terrace R-1 to CS**

Debbie Truempy, Zoning Administrator, said that Ron Moore had applied to rezone a parcel on Oak Terrace Road from R-2 to CS to expand his business. She described the properties that were involved as outlined on the maps attached to the minutes of this meeting. She said that the Planning Department suggested denial finding that it was not consistent with the Land Use Plan. A public hearing was held by the Planning Board and the Board found that the map amendment was consistent with the Land Use Plan and recommended approval. She said that some of the adjoining property owners were in favor of the rezoning.

The Chairman opened the public hearing at 5:41 p.m.

Ron Moore, the petitioner, said that rezoning of this property was crucial to the expansion of this family owned business that employs 8 people.

The Chairman closed the hearing at 5:44 p.m.

Commissioner Belcher moved to approve this request finding it consistent with the Land Use Plan and in the public interest. Commissioner Frost seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Belcher moved to approve the request as stated. Commissioner Pressley seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

COUNTY MANAGERS REPORT

- **Mountain Area Workforce Development Update**

The County Manager welcomed the former County Commission Chairman Nathan Ramsey to speak on behalf of the Mountain Area Workforce Development board. His presentation is attached to the minutes of this meeting. He said that Buncombe had the lowest unemployment rate in the state at 3.7 percent and that 67 percent of Buncombe residents work in Buncombe. The Western region is the only state certified career pathway promoted through the NCWorks Career Center. They can help anyone get matched up with employment and training. By 2025 employment will require postsecondary education and NCWorks is available to help. He said that these opportunities are for everyone without discrimination.

Commissioner Whitesides asked if certificate programs versus two year degree programs were in demand. Mr. Ramsey said that this was the strength of the community college system and the challenge was getting the students into these programs.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Sustainability Plan**

Cynthia Barcklow, County Planner, presented the sustainability plan as attached with the minutes. She reviewed the process in development of the plan and the updates that had been made.

Commissioner Belcher questioned the encouragement of green and energy efficient building in the affordable housing section. Ms. Barcklow said that there were some objectives that could address his concerns.

Vice Chair Frost moved to adopt the sustainability plan as presented. Commissioner Belcher seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Buncombe County Energy Usage Update**

Kristy Smith, Bioreactor Manager, gave the carbon emission report that is attached to the minutes of this meeting. She explained how 1 million pounds of garbage and 92,000 pounds of recycling that were handled every day at the landfill relate to emissions. She reviewed the methane gas transformer that produces electricity as a renewable energy source and offsets what Duke Energy has to produce.

Clint Shepherd, General Services Manager, gave a facilities overview outlining the County's use of energy in its fleet and facilities. The County had been measuring carbon emissions since 2014 and had realized a reduction of at least 2 percent each year.

Commissioner Fryar asked the costs of these changes to save carbon emissions. He wanted the costs of implementing the savings included in the discussions. Jon Creighton, Planning Director, said that the bioreactor is expensive to run but the County does break even with the generation of the electricity.

Commissioner Beach-Ferrara thanked the staff for the work done on these reports. Commissioner Belcher thanked Kristy Smith for making trash interesting to students.

Mr. Shepherd said that he had 19 staff and they are a great team in general services.

The Chairman thanked the staff for taking this seriously and implementing the goals.

- **Creation of Sustainability Office**

The County Manager requested the creation of the position of sustainability officer that would work with department to achieve carbon emission goals; work on sustainability initiatives and help implement those goals and build public and private partnerships to help reduce emissions countywide. She said that the position would be filled by an internal staff person and no additional funding is needed.

The Chairman said that this position would promote sustainability and collaboration within the community and make sure that everyone is working together. Someone needs to be focused on this topic for good outcomes.

The Chairman moved to approve the creation of the Sustainability Office, adding the position of Sustainability Officer and approving the job description attached to the minutes. Vice Chair Frost seconded the motion.

Commissioners Belcher, Whitesides, Pressley and Beach-Ferrara said that they would support this position as it would be accountable, could control the message and coordinate resources and partnerships.

Commissioner Fryar moved to amend the motion to have the position report to Clint Shepherd instead of the County Manager. The motion failed for lack of second.

The Chairman said that this position would be working with community partners and for that reason it should report to the County Manager.

The motion passed 7-0.

The County Manager introduced Jerimiah Leroy who would be the new Sustainability Officer.

The Board took a short break and Vice Chair Frost left the meeting.

- **Lottery Funds for Energy Efficient School Lights**

Alesha Reardon, Buncombe County Schools Energy Manager, presented the work that the County Schools had done to retrofit buildings stating that they would be replacing the florescent lights with LED lights in all County school facilities to improve the quality of the light and save energy. They plan to hire two full time electricians to install these lights over a 2 year period.

Tim Braine spoke in favor of this investment in tax savings and environmental stewardship.

Deedee Maddox of the Sierra Club spoke in favor of this investment.

Jerry Rice was opposed to using lottery funds for anything that was not education. He asked why the schools are not using sunflower solar to save money.

Tim Fierlie, Facilities Director, with County Schools talked about some of the energy saving features in the Enka Intermediate School including the white roof, daylighting and polished concrete floors. He said that county schools can review and compare the energy usage of all their schools and can use daylight to keep lights off during certain parts of the day.

Commissioner Belcher suggested that once the savings are realized they should be invested wisely.

Commissioner Fryar moved to approve the request as presented. Commissioner Pressley seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

- **Development of Buncombe County Solar Farm**

The Chairman presented the possibility of placing a solar farm on the old landfill property outlined in a power point that is attached to the minutes of this meeting. The project would be taken on by an energy company with a long term contract and Duke Energy would purchase the energy to power about 650 homes and reduce the carbon footprint by 18 percent.

The Chairman recommended that the County move forward with the study requiring a \$26,000 application for an engineering study and filing of the necessary certificates.

Commissioner Beach-Ferrara moved to approve the request as outlined. Commissioner Whitesides seconded.

Bill Maloney thanked the Board for their leadership and endorsed the program that he felt would be a win/win for the County and community.

Elizabeth Tate endorsed the idea and thanked the Board for being willing to do the project.

Jerry Rice questioned what parts of the old landfill property might be used for something other than a solar farm and he asked about a gas leak near the landfill.

The motion passed 6-0.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Chairman Newman moved to appoint **Melisa Enclade** to serve on the **Juvenile Crime Prevention Council**. Commissioner Belcher seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

Chairman Newman moved to appoint **Paul Benson** and **Emily Kite** to serve on the **Historic Resources Commission**. Commissioner Belcher seconded and the motion passed 6-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman made the following announcement and adjourned the meeting:

- *March 21 -- 5 p.m. Regular Meeting Board of Commissioners in Room 326 @ 200 College Street in downtown Asheville*

Commissioner Whitesides moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Beach-Ferrara seconded and the motion passed 6-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

KATHY HUGHES, CLERK TO THE
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

BROWNIE NEWMAN, CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS