

**MINUTES OF BUNCOMBE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS'  
REGULAR MEETING OF JUNE 20, 2017 AT 5 P.M.**

---

**BE IT REMEMBERED:** That the Board of Commissioners met in regular session on June 20, 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 attending by phone.  
Joe Belcher, Commissioner  
Mike Fryar, Commissioner  
Jasmine Beach-Ferrara, Commissioner  
Robert Pressley, Commissioner  
Al Whitesides, Commissioner

Staff present: Wanda Greene, County Manager; Mandy Stone, Assistant County Manager; HHS Director; Jon Creighton; Assistant County Manager/Planning Director; Tim Flora, Finance Director; Mike Frue, Senior Staff Attorney; Kathy Hughes, Clerk to the Board.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

## **INVOCATION**

The Chairman gave the invocation and acknowledged that this was the final meeting for Dr. Wanda Greene as County Manager, thanking her for her years of service.

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Don Yelton recommended that the Board work out the budget details in public. He was opposed to the State being asked to fund an increase in the Homestead Circuit Breaker Tax Relief exemption.

Meg Turner, Principal of Charles D. Owen High Schools, thanked the Board for their commitment to education and asked that they fund the final phase of the teacher supplement that was promised last year. She felt this would keep the County competitive with surrounding counties.

Jerry Rice was opposed to the tax increase for the schools. He felt the schools did not need more money and proposed to have the schools fund balance used to meet the increased funding. He complained about the non-profit exemptions from taxes and the money the non-profit leaders were paid.

A County school teacher spoke about funding for the supplement and was worried about this being cut from the budget. She asked for adequate investment by the County in the public school system.

Dr. Katherine Holsten, NC Climate Solutions, spoke in favor of the clean energy proposal. She spoke about climate change and the effects on the planet now and in the future. She felt that reaching 100 percent clean energy by 2050 would be possible.

Hardy Holland with Diane Wortham Theater, asked that the Board continue funding them at the amount of their request because getting only half of the funding would devastate the future of the theater.

Ellie Wells spoke in favor of full funding for the Diana Wortham Center.

Jamie Frederick supported a healthy earth and wanted it protected and restored.

Tyler Garrison thanked the Board for the consideration of the 100 percent clean/renewable energy.

Darren Greene asked for the Board to support the Asheville Art Museum.

Lynn Andrews, Chair of the Art Museum, asked that the Board continue supporting the museum at the original level. She wanted the Board to talk to the Art Museum Board of Directors before any action was taken to cut the funds.

Pamela Myers, Director of the Art Museum, asked for the Board to fund the art museum at the level of \$275,000 to cover the utilities for the facility.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Frost moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Whitesides seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

- **Approval of the Minutes of the June 6 Regular Meeting**
- **Approval of Minutes of June 9 Special Meeting**
- **Resolution Authorizing the Submittal of the Funding Plan and Other Information Related to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council Program for FY17-18 to the NC Department of Public Safety Council**
- **Resolution Encouraging the Trustees of Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College to Allow Greg Isreal to Oversee Maintenance Needs**
- **Resolution Authorizing Acceptance of Request for Surplus Vehicles for Eliada Homes**
- **Resolution of Intent to Convey Property by Quitclaim Deed**
- **Resolution Authorizing Refund of Overpayment of Taxes**
- **FY Budget Amendments**

- School Capital Commission Fund Project Ordinance
- ABTCC Capital Projects Ordinance
- Public School ADM Capital Projects Ordinance
- Capital Projects Ordinance
- General Fund
- Grant Projects Ordinance
- Solid Waste Capital Projects Ordinance
- FY17 Board Certification of Final Amended Budget
- FY18 Budget Amendments:
- School Capital Commission Fund Projects Ordinance
- ABTCC Capital Projects Ordinance
- Public School ADM Capital Projects Ordinance
- Capital Projects Ordinance
- Special Projects Ordinance
- Resolution Approving Pyrotechnic Experts for Firework Displays

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

- **Economic Development Incentive for Highland Brewing**

Jon Creighton, Assistant County Manager/Planning Director, presented the proposed economic incentive for Highland Brewing, a local company with 50 employees. The expansion would create 10 jobs with an investment of \$7.5 million. The incentive is set out in the document attached to the minutes of this meeting. The incentive would total \$51,571. The average pay for these jobs at \$35,000.

Oscar Wong, President of Highland Brewing, said he was proud to be part of the community and that they did not create more jobs because of the increased competition in the brewing industry.

The Chairman opened the public hearing at 5:43 p.m.

Jerry Rice was opposed to the incentives. He was opposed to alcohol and the impact of it on the community.

The hearing was closed at 5:45 p.m.

Commissioner Fryar, Whitesides, Belcher and Frost thanked Mr. Wong for his work and contribution in the community.

Commissioner Whitesides moved to approve the incentive. Commissioner Frost seconded the motion and it passed 6-1 with Commissioner Belcher voting no and noting that he was opposed to this as it was bringing alcohol to the community.

- **Rezoning Request – Wade Watkins PIN 9679.90-0221 (R1 to R-3)**

Debbie Truempy, County Zoning Administrator, said the property was vacant and requested to be rezoned to R-3 from R-1. The Planning Board and staff found this consistent with the Land Use Plan, reasonable and in the public interest. She said that everyone speaking during the public hearing was in favor of the rezoning.

The Chairman opened the public hearing at 5:51 p.m.

No comments were taken.

The Chairman closed the hearing at 5:52 p.m.

Commissioner Belcher moved to approve the rezoning as requested finding it consistent with the Land Use Plan, reasonable and in the public interest.

Commissioner Pressley seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

- **Adoption of FY18 County Budget**

The County Manager reviewed the details and highlights of the budget that is attached to the minutes of this meeting. She said that the budget reflected a 53.9 cent tax rate. The County Manager recommended that the budget be adopted with the following changes:

- \$4,724 reduction in Governing Body budget
- \$75,396 reduction in EMS budget
- \$100,000 transfer to capital to begin Orchard Park in Candler
- \$30,000 increase to fund the Sports Commission for the Southern Conference Tournament
- \$1,539,424 increase for Buncombe County Schools
- \$283,674 increase for Asheville City Schools
- \$1,872,978 increase in fund balance appropriation to cover these net costs.

Vice Chair Frost thanked the Manager for all her work on this budget and moved to approve it with the amendments as mention by the Manager. Commissioner Whitesides seconded.

Commissioner Beach-Ferrara thanked the citizens and non-profits for making everything work without all the funding that they requested and urged everyone to continue working together.

Commissioner Whitesides thanked the County Manager for her guidance through the budget agreeing that everyone did not get what they wanted but acknowledging that the Board tried to do what was best. He noted that the Board of Commissioners were not taking an increase in their salaries.

Commissioner Pressley thanked the County Manager for helping him better understand the budget process.

Commissioner Belcher thanked everyone for working on the budget. He wanted to see a lower tax rate but felt that to sustain the core services in the County, this was a good tax rate.

Commissioner Fryar said that he was opposed to the way that funding had been directed away from Asheville Buncombe Technical Community College to other projects and he would be opposed to this budget as well.

The Chairman confirmed that included in the amendments was the addition of \$1.8 million allowing the County to be able to accomplish the pay raises approved last year.

Dr. Tony Baldwin, County School Superintendent, acknowledged that this amendment would fulfill the benefits for locally paid staff. He said that he would recommend that these funds be used to fulfill the final phase of the local supplement as presented last year.

The motion to approve the budget as amended passed 6-1 as follows

AYES: Chairman Newman, Vice Chair Frost; Commissioners Belcher, Beach-Ferrara, Whitesides, Pressley

NOES: Commissioner Fryar

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Letter of Support for Lee Walker Heights Redevelopment**

The County Manager said that the Asheville Housing Authority was seeking funding for the redevelopment and this letter of endorsement would assist them in leveraging approval in the tax credit process. Funds for the project won't be needed until after July 1 of 2018.

Vice Chair Frost moved to approve the letter of commitment. Commissioner Beach-Ferrara seconded.

Jerry Rice said that no one would talk with him about the project and he was opposed to this investment. He wanted more public comment on this redevelopment.

The County Manager said that this funding would be included in the FY19 budget for consideration by the Board at that time.

The motion passed 7-0.

- **Resolution Appointing Keith Miller Interim Tax Director**

The County Manager explained the resolution saying that the Tax Director was retiring on July 1 and the County must have a Tax Director

Commissioner Fryar moved to approve the resolution. Commissioner Whitesides seconded.

Don Yelton said that he had dealt with Mr. Miller and felt he would make a good Tax Director. He suggested that Mr. Miller be considered as the full time Tax Director.

The motion passed 7-0.

- **100 Percent Clean Energy Presentation**

The Chairman gave the presentation that is attached to the minutes of the meeting. He asked that formal consideration of action on this presentation be held at the August 15 meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

He would have the Energy Innovation Task Force review the policy along with County staff.

Vice Chair Frost said that this was important work to move the county forward. Commissioner Belcher said that he supported renewable energy but challenged staff to review this carefully as to the affordability of meeting the goals of 2027 for 100 percent clean energy.

Commissioner Fryar was critical of the cost of clean energy and wanted further investigation into the costs of conversion.

Commissioner Beach-Ferrara said that the ambitious nature of this is exciting and hoped for community discussion of the possibilities of being good stewards of the planet and the public health.

- **Resolution Endorsing Tax Relief Through Expanded Homestead Circuit Breaker Tax Relief**

Mike Frue, Senior Staff Attorney, reviewed the resolution including a revision to include any permanent North Carolina resident who is at least 65 years of age and or totally and permanently disabled.

Vice Chair Frost said that removing the years in residence would allow support of more homeowners.

Commissioner Belcher said this would make it available for those that meet the income requirements. He felt like this would have to be useful for 100 counties and the neighbors should be willing to endorse as well.

Commissioner Frost moved to approve the resolution with the revised language. Commissioner Belcher seconded.

Brenda Smith said that the state of South Carolina had an exemption that was similar with no requirement for how long you lived in your home.

Jerry Rice said that he sent the Board a copy of House Bill 900 that involved municipalities and taxing structure. The motion passed 7-0.

## **BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

Vice Chair Frost moved to appoint **Billy Taylor** to the **Planning Board** representing the Reynolds District. The motion passed 7-0.

Commissioner Belcher moved to appoint **Corie Hackney, Jason Simons, Cristopher McGlashan**, and reappoint **Ann Ashley, Peter Cook, Bryan Dover, Rick Elingburg, Dennis King, John Rakes and Tony Reid** to the **Mountain Area Workforce Development Board**.

The Chairman asked for a motion to add to the agenda consideration of creation of the Dr. Wanda Greene Scholarship at Elida Home. Commissioner Whitesides moved to add this to the agenda. Commissioner Beach-Ferrara seconded and the motion passed 7-0.

### **Dr. Wanda Greene Scholarship**

The Chairman said that the Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the citizens of the County, would like to create the Wanda Greene Scholarship Fund at Eliada Home in the amount of \$5,000 to be used to help parents in need cover child care fees. These funds will be part of the Eliada Foundation and permanently restricted for said use.

Vice Chair Frost moved to create the Dr. Wanda Greene Scholarship as outlined by the Chairman. Commissioner Whitesides seconded and the motion passed 7-0. The County Manager thanked the Board for the opportunity to work for the County saying she hoped she had left it better than she found it.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcement and adjourned the meeting:

- *July 4 – Holiday—County offices are closed*
- *July 11, 24 – Noon – Commissioners' Workshops at 200 College Street in Asheville*
- *August 1 - 5 p.m. Regular Meeting Board of Commissioners in Room 326 @ 200 College Street in downtown Asheville*

Vice Chair Frost moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Pressley seconded the motion which passed 7-0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

---

KATHY HUGHES, CLERK TO THE  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

---

BROWNIE NEWMAN, CHAIRMAN  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS