

**GATES COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MAY 18, 2015**

The Gates County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session at 7:00 p.m. Monday, May 18, 2015 in the Main Court Room, 202 Court Street, Gatesville. Commissioners Hofler, Owens, Jordan, Felton, and Freeman were present. Also present was County Manager, Natalie Rountree.

Commissioner Felton led in prayer and the pledge of allegiance.

Chairman Hofler called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes are approved during the 1st monthly meeting; none are available at this time.

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Hofler stated the agenda needs to be amended to add Linda Peterson with the Albemarle RC&D to announced delegations.

Commissioner Jordan made a motion to approve the agenda as modified. Commissioner Owens seconded the motion, motion carried unanimously.

Delegations – Announced

Linda Peterson, Albemarle RC&D, presented an update to the Board on Albemarle RC&D. The update included how the organization was formed, service areas, grant funding that is received, projects that have been completed in the past few years and current projects. In Gates County there have been over 30 projects completed since 1980. There has been the Gatesville Town Park, Gatesville Fitness Trails and Ballparks, Town of Gatesville Wetland Area, the Gates County High School Outdoor Environmental Learning Site, Merchants Millpond State Park campsites, boardwalks, and handicap ramps with a 300 foot boardwalk to each platform and handicap accessible ramps. Ms. Peterson concluded by asking the Board to continue to provide support with the \$750 requested from tier one counties.

Commissioner Jordan and Hofler thanked Ms. Peterson for the presentation and stated they look forward to more projects in Gates County.

Delegations – Unannounced

Earl Rountree, Sunbury, shared with the Board some of his past and present political acquaintances and mentors. Mr. Rountree outlined briefly his political journey and bid the Board farewell.

Administrative Reports

Administrative reports are presented during the 1st monthly meeting; none are available at this time

Public Hearings

Commissioner Owens made a motion to enter into a public hearing for the FY 2015/2016 Fee Schedule. Commissioner Felton seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Hofler opened up the floor for comments. There were no public comments.

Commissioner Jordan made a motion to exit the public hearing for the FY 2015/2016 Fee Schedule. Commissioner Owens seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Owens made a motion to approve the FY 2015/2016 Fee Schedule. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

Commissioner Jordan asked if there were any changes to the special use permit fees. Ms. Rountree noted there were no changes to the special use permit. Commissioner Owens

verified that throughout the year no changes will be made to the fee schedule without a public hearing taking place.

Commissioner Owens made a motion to enter into a public hearing for the FY 2015/2016 Budget. Commissioner Felton seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously.

Mickey Lee, Gatesville, explained he and his family have lived in the County for 30 years and have raised three children that have all went through the education system and continued onto higher education. Mr. Lee recognized the Board for the tough job they have to do and reminded them that one of the most important things we can do as a County is provide our children with the best education possible and it to be able to do that the Schools need an increase in funds.

Christy Stevens, Gates County Teacher, has been teaching with Gates County Schools for 13 years and is a product of Gates County Schools. Ms. Stevens asked the Board to respect the requests of the Superintendent and consider providing more funding for the schools. The schools make Gates County what it is and the extra money is needed to ensure the schools can stay as great as they are. Ms. Stevens feels the School System has the correct people in place to make them a leader in the region. The schools need the extra funding so programs and teachers can remain the same.

Darleen Mundie, Parent of a Teacher, stated she moved to the community about ten years ago and moved here because the people were friendly and she loved the area. She took both of her children out of private school to put them in Gates County Schools. All of her children went away to college and have been very successful. One of them is a first year teacher who turned down several positions to teach at Gates County High School and loves his job. Ms. Mundie would hate to see children lack for the best education by being put in larger classrooms and having less teachers.

Leslie Byrum, Hobbsville, explained he is a Board of Education Member, tax payer and a parent. The biggest problem with the system in Gates County is there are a numerous amount of teachers that are retiring that have been in the system for years. There are a lot of teachers that have one or two year tenure and tenure is up in the air. The Board signed a resolution to RIF if needed. Mr. Byrum is happy to serve on a Board that scrutinizes a budget and looks for creative ways to finance education. Mr. Byrum ask that the Board of Commissioners be creative when it comes to the funding of the schools as they are the largest employer and have some great new teachers.

Commissioner Freeman made a motion to exit the public hearing for the FY 2015/2016 Budget. Commissioner Felton seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Hofler stated it has been a very difficult year and the budget has made most departments very unhappy. Just about every department has taken a hit in their funding but fortunately the County was able to keep the school system flat so that we do not have to see a cut in our school funding. Chairman Hofler also stated the text book funding may be reinstated and should help bring a little more funds back to the school system.

Old Business

Commissioner Freeman made a motion to appoint Mr. Ronald Taylor to the Planning Board for a three year term. Commissioner Owens seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

Chairman Hofler clarified that Mr. Ken Jernigan was appointed at the last meeting and a formal application has been received.

New Business

Sandy Pittman, Finance Director, presented budget amendment 19 to increase the budget for water and sewer fund using higher than anticipated revenue to purchase a tractor for sewer functions per NCDENR recommendations.

Commissioner Owens made a motion to approve budget amendment 19. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

Chairman Hofler stated each year we pass a resolution for US Merchant Mariners and it is being asked that the Board approves it again this year due to some concerns about who would qualify for recognition.

Commissioner Freeman made a motion to approve A Resolution of the North Carolina Gates County Board of Commissioners in Support of Alternative Method of Recognition for Veterans Status to WWII Coastwise Merchant Mariners. Commissioner Owens seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

Chairman Hofler stated May is the month chosen to recognize Older Americans and there is a proclamation before the Board.

Commissioner Owens read the following proclamation:

Older Americans Month 2015

A PROCLAMATION

Whereas, Gates County includes a thriving community of older Americans who deserve recognition for their contributions and sacrifices to ensure a better life for future generations; and

Whereas, Gates County is committed to helping all individuals live longer, healthier lives in the communities of their choice for as long as possible; and

Whereas, since 1965, the Older Americans Act has provided services that help older adults remain healthy and independent by complementing existing medical and health care systems, helping prevent hospital readmissions, and supporting some of life's most basic functions, such as bathing or preparing meals; and

Whereas, these programs also support family caregivers, address issues of exploitation, neglect and abuse of older adults, and adapt services to the needs of Native American elders; and

Whereas, we recognize the value of community engagement and service in helping older adults remain healthy and active while giving back to others; and

Whereas, our community can provide opportunities to enrich the lives of individuals of all ages by:

- Promoting and engaging in activity, wellness, and social inclusion.
- Emphasizing home- and community-based services that support independent living.
- Ensuring community members of all ages benefit from the contributions and experience of older adults.

Now therefore, The Board of Commissioners of Gates County do hereby proclaim May 2015 to be Older Americans Month. We urge every resident to take time this month to celebrate older adults and the people who serve and support them as powerful and vital individuals who greatly contribute to the community.

Commissioner Jordan made a motion to approve the Proclamation for Older Americans Month 2015. Commissioner Freeman seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

Commissioner Jordan made a motion to approve the Resolution Approving Northeastern Workforce Development Consortium Agreement. Commissioner Owens seconded the motion; motion passed without opposition.

Commissioner Jordan made a motion to Appoint Commissioner Hofler to continue to serve on the Northeastern Workforce Development Consortium. Commissioner Felton seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Owens made a motion to appoint Commissioner Freeman to the Mental Health Regional Advisory Board. Commissioner Felton seconded the motion; motion passed unanimously.

Citizen Comments

None

Ms. Rountree stated Sass Conservation should have the Historic Courthouse report completed by the end of the month. Also the Tri-County Animal Shelter provided an update which was placed in the Boards packet.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Freeman thanked citizens for attending and stated the Board is committed to the citizens of the county and the Board relies on citizen recommendations to make the best informed decisions. Commissioner Freeman thanked citizens for their support of the Wounded Warrior project through donations and volunteer service. Next year will be the fifth annual Wounded Warrior Turkey Hunt and they are looking forward to it already.

Commissioner Felton thanked citizens for attending and said it is nice to see so many in attendance. There will be a representative from solid waste management talking about recycling at the next meeting, it is important for all citizens to realize that recycling brings money back to the County while we have to pay for trash.

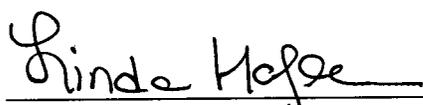
Commissioner Jordan thanked citizens for attending and showing an interest in the decisions that are being made. The decisions that are made effect all citizens, students and the quality of life in the County. Commissioner Jordan reiterated that the Board hears what citizens are saying and listens to their recommendations when making decisions.

Commissioner Owens thanked everyone for attending and stated teachers and those involved with the school system should be holding their heads very high for the students that are being produced as we have many students that continue on to do great things. We are very proud of our school system and the things being accomplished. The County Manager has asked all departments to cut their budgets in order to help maintain the budget for the school system. There has been a lot of deliberations and nights spent working on the budget and some very hard decisions had to be made. The month of May is Older Americans Month and we are the only county in NC to not have a senior center, something needs to be done about this. The Board addressed the issue at an earlier meeting this month and have agreed to do some research and to try to eliminate that title.

Chairman Hofler thanked citizens for attending and reiterated the budget has been a tough job especially with all of the unfunded mandates being handed down. DSS Medicaid has been cut \$150,000 last year, \$150,000 this year and next year there will be an additional cut of \$150,000 that has to be made up somewhere. The Board fully supports the school system and the teachers. It has been tough to ask departments to take a 10% cut and we wish that we had a money tree to be able to provide more funding. We are going to try to think outside of the box and start looking at different avenues to try to provide the best for everyone. We hope to be able to start looking for funding for a senior center down the road. We listen to your calls and return your calls and we are here to serve you.

Adjournment

Commissioner Jordan made a motion adjourn. Commissioner Owens seconded the motion, motion passed without opposition.



 Linda Hofler, Chairman



 Melissa C. Lawrence, Clerk