

Lindsey informed the Board about potential funds for the celebration of America's and requested a committee be made for the event.

Glenn Knox

RE: Bonds

Knox requested information for how many bonds have been taken out on Stokes County and what collateral was used to secure them be posted on the Stokes County website.

Candis Loy

RE: AC Ordinances

Loy states that the ACAB has not seen, reviewed, or recommended new ordinances being presented. Loy does not approve of tethering changes. Conceded the remaining 2 minutes and 23 seconds to Kathleen Edwards.

Kathleen Edwards

RE: AC Ordinances

Edwards discussed changes to the Animal Control ordinances that she did not agree with and the reasons why.

JoAnne Silvia

RE: AC Ordinances

Silvia discusses the changes to the Animal Control ordinances and how the amendments are moving backwards rather than forwards.

Chairman Wood closed the floor for public comments at 2:26 pm.

COMMENTS - Managers/Commissioners

Chairman Wood opened the floor for comments from the manager and commissioners.

Vice-Chairman Barneycastle commented:

- It's great to see everyone. I just got a text saying that we're not livestreaming. Just letting you be aware.
- It's been a busy weekend in our county. Some of you may know, we had a big fire up at Sandy Ridge, about 270 acres. I had the privilege of helping those folks. I told somebody yesterday that the fire department in this county is a brotherhood. We go anywhere we're needed. I saw a big outpouring of love of the community and surrounding communities. Food, money, and everything else. It's great to see that kind of support from our county, from all over.
- I would like to send a special prayer out to Von and Buster Robertson. Buster lost his wife a little bit ago, which is Von's mother. I would like to send a special prayer out to those folks today. God comfort that family today.
- Thank you again for being here.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Welcome everybody. It's good to see you here.
- First of all, I went this morning to a ceremony ribbon-cutting session for a park that Forsyth County has just opened. It's called the J. Dudley Watts Jr. Belews Lake Park and it's right on the county line, just off 65, at 7455 Craig Road, which is just after you turn left at the Dollar General there. So, I would really recommend everybody go check it out. It's got a floating fishing dock and there's three phases to it. The first phase is completed, and they have some funding toward the next phases. But it'll certainly be a great resource for Stokes County folks as well as other people in the region.

- The other thing I want to do is I have my No Spin Zone. As usual, a reminder, anything I say in my No Spin Zone is my opinion based on my observations of the facts.
- I would like to start by warning folks about a new website named realstokescounty.com. that appears to have been created by Mr. Glen Knox since it has his email address on it. From a couple of the first posts on the site, it appears to be a new tool to harass, bash and discredit the three commissioners on this board who will be up for re-election in next year's primary. It also appears to be an extension of the Stokes County Republican Party Facebook page, which is also used for a similar purpose, where some party members are allowed to make posts and others are censored by having their posts removed. Let me provide a couple of examples to support my point on why this website was created.
- Under the heading on the site of "What are the Stokes Commissioners up to now!??"
Under this section Mr. Knox states that because he couldn't find the campaign photos that our group used on the web, we must have been involved in the creation of the flyer that was put out by a political action committee. His logic is a real stretch since our campaign photos have been widely distributed to anyone who asked for them, especially our supporters. It's also worth noting that there are no restrictions on who candidates give their campaign photos to, including PACs. Our campaign photos have been on cards, in the newspaper, on social media sites and my campaign photo is right on the front page of my website bio. I'll state one last time that our group had nothing to do with the creation, funding or distribution of the joint campaign card that was mailed out during the last election.
- Under the heading of "Who is the Conservative Stokes Committee?"
This post is a second illustration of the intended purpose of the new website to bash and discredit the three commissioners. It starts out with a paragraph about a Republican Conference that was held on March 2nd, and the things people were doing there. I, not sure who the accusations are pointed at exactly, but I didn't attend anything on the 2nd of March for any political meetings. I don't know that of us did either. Then it has a list of people who are in this committee and their contributions. I guess that's just straight off of the public records that the election folks have down in Raleigh of donors. The last part of this post is the most concerning. It pertains to Mr. Mark Black's acquisition of the closed Francisco Elementary School. Mr. Knox's post says that Mr. Black purchased the old Francisco School for a fraction of its worth, a sale, slid thru by Commissioner Morris. Then it says he was able to sell the property for more than he paid.
- First, when Mr. Black acquired the property, I was not a commissioner, I was the county manager. The county commissioners at the time unanimously approved the transfer of the property through a grant program developed jointly by the Francisco community and the county staff, to include the county attorney. Commissioner Jimmy Walker was instrumental in getting Mr. Black to finally accept the grant. Let me give you a brief history of exactly what happened which will show how Mr. Knox has twisted the facts:
- The community begged the commissioners not to sell the property on the public square for fear it would become a hay barn or something worse.
- Many meetings were held between the community and county staff to produce a better alternative that would add value to the community. A local grant program was developed and received the necessary approvals, legally and otherwise, and the community convinced Mr. Black to acquire the property.
- The grant required Mr. Black to invest several hundred thousand dollars in the facility and to provide a specified number of full-time jobs, for a specified period, and at a specified wage level. He met all those requirements, and it was verified by the county attorney.
- Mr. Black has not sold the property though he purchased about fifteen acres of adjoining land and recently donated that land to the county for a community park in Francisco.
- He is now in the process of converting the school buildings to house multiple retail businesses, which will be a valued addition to the local community. One new business is already open.

- The grant agreement and associated discussions on the transfer of the school are all documented in the commissioner meeting minutes from that period, and Mr. Black has proven to be a generous supporter of the Francisco Community.
- I hope these two examples serve as clear illustrations of the true purpose of the new website and how they play loose with the facts to fit their own narrative. It should be noted that the last time similar accusations were made against me, the previous commissioners and Mr. Black, Joe Turpin pulled the minutes reflecting the facts and posted them on the Stokes County Republican Party Facebook Page. His post was quickly removed by Mr. Knox's associates in the Republican Party who sensor those fellow Republicans they don't like or agree with.
- Thank you, Mr. Chairman, that's all I have.

Commissioner Chandler:

- I'd like to welcome everybody to the Board of Commissioners meeting. First of all, just to touch on what Commissioner Barneycastle was talking about with the fires in Stokes County. Thank goodness, thank God, that at least I haven't heard of anybody being hurt or anything like that. And I think property damage has been at least minimized when it comes to structures, correct? I just want to jump on his back and say it's really great that the whole community comes together. Not just the Stokes County community, but I know Rockingham also provided a big resource and then our forestry service I know from the state also were in the air and on the ground. So, that is one thing that we can all come together on and say we live in a good county. WE have good equipment overall for our fire apparatuses and the only thing we need to improve upon is volunteers and to get fire stations especially during the week they're available county-wide to respond where they're needed.
- The proposed animal control ordinance, we're going to talk about it today. I know speaking for me, I'm not putting anything to action today for a vote. So, there will be opportunity to at least listen to what other people are saying. It maybe we get more clarification too when their presentation comes.
- Just a reminder, on the tax evaluation, a tax rate has not been set yet. I know our manager is diligently working with staff to come up with different scenarios. We have got to continue to move forward here in Stokes County and I just want to say that there has been a lot of change in Stokes County in the last two years. Some people can say that it's been for the worst and that's okay. Everybody has an opinion. But I think the people working here in Stokes County and the ones that have been here for a little while that have any kind of use in county services, I think they have noticed a difference and as we continue to go through the process of actually having policies, revising policies, the sense that it's not political and that it is what is best practice and has been going on in a lot of other counties in the state of North Carolina. We're trying to move as fast as we can, but also, we want to move where it makes sense and make sure that we're not missing anything.
- With that being said, I just want to thank the manager and the staff because they are pumping out a lot of work. And it's not something that you just come up with in a day, and I want to thank our legal staff too because I know it's putting some pressure on our legal staff to make sure that everything is right liability-wise and personnel-wise. So, I appreciate that.
- Everybody is contributing to improve the working conditions and to improve our services that we provide to our residents and visitors that are efficient and effective and as least costly as we can be but still providing the services that are mandated by the state and federal government.
- That's all I have to say, Mr. Chair.

County Manager Jeff Sanborn commented:

- I have two things I'd like to comment on. The first is we have entered into a contract with ETC Institute from Olathe, Kansas to do our community survey. We plan to spend about the

next month putting together the list of questions and formatting that survey instrument with the idea that we would have it out for input from the community in the month of June, maybe extending into July. Ultimately, we want to have results by about the first of September, so we can use those results to inform the planning process for the next year.

- The second is that you probably recall at your last meeting I gave you a quick update on our budget review process. I let you know that we had completed our reviews of the departmental level requested budgets and I commented that it looked like we were going to come in a little bit better than we had previously been forecasting on the expenditure side and probably also on the revenue side as well as a result of changes to the fees and charges schedule. One quick update on that, the sum total of the cuts that we made from departmental level budgets was \$2.8 million. Before anybody gets excited about that, one way or the other, I just want to caution you that the majority of those cuts were on line items where we have historically over budgeted and have not spent that money. We're going to have to make some corrections to our budget to actual variance assumptions that are built into the 5-year model. As a result, I expect that over the longer term, over that 5-year horizon, the impact of that accounting change if you will, will be minable. Probably still will be positive, but it won't be huge. On the revenue side, we do have the updated fees and charges schedule recommendation for your review. Amber will be presenting that later on in your meeting, and I think she will also be giving you some initial feedback on what we think the impact is going to be on the revenue side.
- That concludes my comments.

Commissioner Cox commented:

- Piggybacking off of the fires, thank you to all the fire departments that responded to the fires and our community members who came with all kinds of donations to the fire department and all the people that responded to the fires. We really appreciate all that. And I wanted to say that I also send my condolences to the Robertson family with the loss of Barbara. I didn't know that until you made mention of that.
- I also want to make us aware; we'll be getting more information about this later, but Germanton school is having their 100th year anniversary celebration on Friday, April 11th from 5:30 to 7:30. The community is invited to that. South Stokes is doing one the next day, on Saturday the 12th from 11:00 to 2:00.
- Also, I just want to briefly comment on something. I had a number of people contact me regarding our comment time and how it is getting too political. I know Amber reads a statement at the beginning usually before the comment time to ask people to refrain from, or discourages political speeches, and I don't think it's right for us to sit up here and make political speeches. If it was something that was said on Facebook or the internet, I think we either need to ignore it or address it there. If you can't do that, I just don't think this is the time or the place to do that stuff. We have a comment time. We ask people who are commenting to us to limit it to three to four minutes, and I think we should try to do the same. I think as a courtesy we should limit our time to three to four minutes. It should be plenty of time to address that kind of stuff. I think it's a waste of the public's time and our time when things can be addressed elsewhere. I'm not saying don't address it if you feel it necessary but using a position up here as your bully pulpit is not right. It's a bad look for our whole Board. If you want to go to the Executive Committee meetings, the Men's Club, the Lady's Club, there are avenues to address political things. I just don't think if it's not county business we need to address it here. If you address the school, that's county. That was something, I understand, a county issue so I get that. But my question is who developed the local grant program that you referred to?
- I wasn't sure because I wasn't in on that when that was going on. That's all I have. Thank you for coming today.

Chairman Wood commented:

- Welcome everybody. I want to thank the King Chamber for putting on their event Thursday night, it was well attended and very good.
- Congratulations to Walnut Cove because for the first time in their history they finally have a Town Hall. It was a long time coming.
- The other thing, I live in Danbury but I've noticed a lot of people come up to me that are from Walkertown and they're coming up here to get away from their town. It's alarming. All you have to do is go down there. I mean, it's growing, and they're alarmed at the growth. The roads are all tore up and Walkertown is not that far from Stokes.
- I read an article that North Carolina, by 2035, will be the 7th largest state in the Union, population wise. If that don't scare you or if you want all this mess, welcome it, that's up to y'all because I won't be around to see it. But you need to pump to pump the brakes. I was tickled that King actually said "no" and pumped the brakes. Walnut Cove's doing a good job. We need smart small growth.
- The other part of that article was most of it will be people moving here, which is contributed to all the real estate values going up and everything else. I don't see anything changing anytime soon, I'm afraid to say. But they were complaining about these huge developments in Walkertown with housing and we're next. The same thing's going on at Stokesdale, so we need to look at that and address or our future is going to get ugly.

Conflicts Of Interest

Chairman Wood asked if any Board member had a conflict of interest with any of the items of the agenda for today or one that could be perceived as a conflict of interest.

No conflicts of interest were stated by the Board.

CONSENT AGENDA

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

Budget Amendments

Tax Office Agenda

Chairman Wood entertained a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, which included the below:

- Budget Amendments
- Tax Office Agenda

Commissioner Cox moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Vice-Chairman Barneycastle seconded the motion. The motion Passed.

DISCUSSION AGENDA

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

Moratock Park Hours and Bridge Replacement Project

Chairman Wood turned the floor over to Public Works Director Stewart Easter to present the Moratock Park Hours and Bridge Replacement Project.

Public Works Director Stewart Easter presented the Moratock Park Hours and Bridge Replacement Project. The NC Department of Transportation is currently working on a project with replacing the bridge located over the Dan River near the County-owned Moratock Park. During the bridge replacement project, there will be active construction near the park and around the river on the upper side. For the safety and well-being of Stokes County citizens and employees, County Management is recommending the closure of the upper side of Moratock Park for the upcoming park season and for the foreseeable future until the project is complete. The recommendation is to close the side of the park to the left after passing over the bridge and restrict access to the bank area and water near and under the bridge. The lower side of the park where the Iron Furnace is located at, is recommended to be left open for public use.

Chairman Wood opened the floor for discussion.

After some discussion concerning safety, this item was moved to the Discussion Agenda for the next meeting.

Vehicle Use Policy

Chairman Wood turned the floor over to HR Director Jamie Clark to present the Vehicle Use Policy.

HR Director Jamie Clark in coordination with the County Manager's Office presented for consideration and approval a Vehicle Use Policy for Stokes County. The policy establishes uniform vehicle use practices and requirements for Stokes County employees.

HR Director Jamie Clark along with County Manager Jeff Sanborn discussed the policy with the Board.

Chairman Wood opened the floor for discussion.

After some discussion, this item was moved to the Discussion Agenda for the next meeting.

Request to Amend the Stokes County Animal Control Ordinance

Chairman Wood turned the floor over to Animal Control Director Tommy Reeves to present the Request to Amend the Stokes County Animal Control Ordinance.

Animal Control Director Tommy Reeves presented an Amended Animal Control Ordinance for Stokes County for consideration. Director Reeves also requested the approval of Amended Animal Control Advisory Board (ACAB) bylaws. Both documents have been reviewed and approved by legal.

Chairman Wood opened the floor for discussion.

Director Reeves answered questions from the Board about the proposed changes to the Animal Control Ordinance, as well as the ACAB bylaws.

After some discussion, this item was moved to the Discussion Agenda for the next meeting.

Stokes County Fees and Charges Schedule

Chairman Wood turned the floor over to Assistant County Manager Amber Brown to present the

Stokes County Fees and Charges Schedule.

Assistant County Manager Amber Brown presented a comprehensive fee schedule for the County which allows for all fees and charges to be located in one place with uniformity for the public and employees to access. Having a comprehensive fee schedule also allows for an easier annual review of all fees and updates of those fees when needed on a yearly basis. After departments recently reviewed their fee schedules to make sure they were current, several departments have recommended increases in their fees: EMS, Environmental Health, the Fire Marshal's Office, and the Health Department.

Chairman Wood opened the floor for discussion.

Assistant Manager Brown and Manager Sanborn answered questions from the Board about the Stokes County Fees and Charges Schedule.

After some discussion, this item was moved to the Action Agenda next meeting.

ACTION AGENDA

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Parks and Recreation Steering Committee Appointments

At the last commissioner's meeting, the Board of Commissioners nominated all applicants to serve on the steering committee.

No more applications have been received since.

The Board was polled to appoint the applicants as presented:

- Randy Ingram
- Derek Edwards
- Adam Rutledge
- Randy Honeycutt
- Kathryn Converse
- Anna Wheeler
- Bart Stone
- Kim Schott-Schwiegeraht
- Marcie Privetts
- Sid Wise
- Jae Furman
- Tory Mabe - County Representative
- Stewart Easter - County Representative

All Board members agreed to the list as presented.

The Board of Commissioners appointed the above individuals to serve on the steering committee.

Adjournment

Chairman Wood entertained a motion to adjourn.

Vice-Chairman Barneycastle moved to adjourn at 4:02 pm.

Commissioner Cox seconded. The motion Passed.

Amber Brown
Clerk to the Board

Keith Wood
Chair
