

# AGENDA



Brad Chandler, Chairman  
Keith Wood, Vice Chairman  
Sonya Cox, Commissioner  
Ronnie Mendenhall, Commissioner  
Rick Morris, Commissioner

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**Monday, February 12, 2024**  
**1014 MAIN STREET**  
**DANBURY, NC 27016**  
**6:00 PM**

**Call to Order**

**Invocation**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**I. Approval of the Agenda**

**II. Recognition of South Stokes Mens Basketball Team**

**a. Presentation of Certificates**

**III. Public Comments**

**IV. Comments - Managers/Commissioners**

**V. Conflicts Of Interest**

**VI. Consent Agenda**

**a. Minutes**

**b. Budget Amendments**

**c. Tax Office Items for Approval**

**VII. Information Agenda**

**a. Cooperative Extension Director Introduction**

**b. Hanging Rock State Park Report**

**c. Presentation of the FY 22/23 Audit**

**d. Strategic Planning**

**e. Clarification of Employee Totals**

**VIII. Discussion Agenda**

**a. Walnut Cove Planning and Zoning Board ETJ Appointments**

- b. Budget Goals for FY 24/25**
- c. Electronic Advertisement of Solicitations for Bid**

#### **IX. Action Agenda**

- a. Draft Resolution Authorizing the Establishment of an Occupancy Tax and Tourism Development Authority**
- b. Electronic Advertisement of Solicitations for Bid**

#### **X. Adjournment**

\*Anyone with a disability(is) who needs an accommodation to participate in this meeting is requested to inform us 48 hours prior to the scheduled time of the affected group meeting

\*Attachments may be delivered before or at the time of the meeting

\*Times may vary due to times preset for agenda items



**Board of County Commissioners  
February 12, 2024  
6:00 PM**

**Item number: II.a.**

**Presentation of Certificates**

Contact:

Summary:

The South Stokes Mens Basketball Team won the Frank Spencer Holiday Classic back in December. The Board of Commissioners would like to recognize these talented young men for their efforts and success in winning this tournament.

Team Members:

- Korrin N'Diaye
- Barry Hairston Jr.
- Ethan Tilley
- Connor Cox
- Isiah Lash
- Deuce Chalmers
- Jake Lozzi
- Michael Werts
- Jordan Mickey
- Brady Clark
- William Tilley
- Amari Conrad
- Bryson Stephens
- Josiah Cleghorn

Managers/Scorekeepers

- Jade Bullins
- Aaron Ramsey

Coaches

- Jason Clark
- Derek Ward
- Matthew Weaver
- Ben Bowen
- Travis Brewer
- Ja Anderson



**Board of County Commissioners  
February 12, 2024  
6:00 PM**

**Item number: VI.a.**

**Minutes**

Contact: Interim Manager/Clerk to the Board Amber Brown

Summary:

Minutes for Approval:

- November 2, 2023 Joint Meeting with the Board of Education Minutes
- January 22, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes
- February 6, 2024 Planning Meeting Minutes

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
November 2, 2023 Joint Meeting with Board of Education Minutes	2/10/2024	Cover Memo
January 22, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes	2/10/2024	Cover Memo
February 6, 2024 Planning Meeting Minutes	2/10/2024	Cover Memo



**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA )**  
**)**  
**COUNTY OF STOKES )**  
**)**

**OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS**  
**STOKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT**  
**DANBURY, NORTH CAROLINA**  
**THURSDAY NOVEMBER 2, 2023**

The Stokes County Board of County Commissioners, State of North Carolina, met for a Joint Meeting with the Stokes County Board of Education on Thursday, November 2, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the Commissioners' Chambers located in the Administrative Building in Danbury, North Carolina.

The following members for the Board of County Commissioners were present for the Joint Meeting: Chairman Rick Morris, Vice Chairman Brad Chandler, Commissioner Sonya Cox, Commissioner Ronnie Mendenhall, and Commissioner Keith Wood.

The following Board of Education (BOE) members were present for the Joint Meeting: Chairperson Von Robertson, Vice Chairperson Dwayne Bryant, Member Justin Duncan, Member Cheryl Knight, and Member Mike Rogers.

The following school administrative staff members were present for the Joint Meeting: Dr. Brad Rice, Superintendent, Dr. Jared Jones, Assistant Superintendent, Executive Director of Finance Lanette Moore, Director of Maintenance/Facilities Richie Roberts, and Administrative Assistant to the Board of Education Pam Bolejack.

The following County Administration staff members were present for the Joint Meeting: Interim County Manager/Clerk to the Board Amber Brown and Finance Director Lisa Lankford.

Chairman Chandler called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

BOE Chairman Robertson called the joint meeting for the Board of Education to order.

## **INVOCATION**

Chairman Morris invited those in attendance to join the Boards in the invocation, if so desired.

BOE Member Duncan delivered the invocation.

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Morris invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Morris noted that before the meeting opened, a poll was taken from those in audience to see if anyone would like to make any public comments with no one interested at that time.

After Chairman Morris' comments regarding public comments, one person from the audience requested to speak.

Chairman Morris entertained a motion to approve and amend tonight's agenda to allow public comments.

Commissioner Cox moved to approve tonight's agenda with the addition of public comments. Commissioner Wood seconded the motion.

Chairman Morris opened the floor for discussion/questions/comments.

With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

BOE Chairperson Robertson entertained a motion to amend the agenda presented by the Board of County Commissioners to add public comments.

BOE Member Knight moved to amend the agenda. BOE Member Rogers seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

BOE Chairperson Robertson entertained a motion to approve the amended agenda.

BOE Member Knight moved to approve the amended agenda. BOE Member Duncan seconded the motion.

BOE Chairperson Robertson opened the floor for discussion/questions/comments.

With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Morris opened the floor for public comments.

The following spoke during public comments.

### **Cameron Rogatsios**

Resident of Stokes County

Ms. Rogatsios noted the following:

- Lives in Stokes County

- Sure, there is stuff that I don't understand, but what it seems to me like if we have got an opportunity to give \$2 million to get \$38 million, why would we not do that no matter which school it goes towards
- That is \$38 million that we don't have to spend later down the road
- It just makes zero sense to me, but I am sure there may be some stuff I don't understand
- That is just my two cents

Chairman Morris questioned if there was anyone else who wanted to speak since the agenda was amended to add public comments.

With no other speakers, Chairman Morris closed the floor for public comments.

## **JOINT MEETING DISCUSSION**

Chairman Morris turned the floor over to BOE Chairperson Robertson for opening comments from the Board of Education members.

BOE Chairperson Robertson commented:

- Would like to first thank the Board of County Commissioners for the invite to discuss the long-range planning – something that the Board of Education has been discussing for several months
- Have spent a lot of time during our meetings discussing this topic
- We feel like we have pretty much come to a consensus on our Board of Education, and we will be happy tonight to discuss a little bit of our plan and then answer any questions that the commissioners may have

BOE Member Knight commented:

- Would like to thank the Board of Commissioners for participating with us
- What might seem like a cut and dry issue has turned out to be very, very complex with lots of ripple effects from changes within the school system
- I think the Board would agree, it has been difficult, trying, stressful – probably one of the toughest things I know that I have had to take on as far as consolidation
- Consolidation is almost like a bad word – it is tough
- I know this is a historically situation that kind of has been seen over the past twenty-five years or more – now we are trying to address it the best we can
- We still have a lot of work to do that is why we are here to talk to the Board of Commissioners

BOE Vice Chairperson Bryant commented:

- Would also like to thank the Board of Commissioners for meeting with us – know we have been working on scheduling this joint meeting, glad we are here tonight
- I know how trying this is for everyone and it has not been easy, but we have 5,500 kids that we have got to think about, I am trying to do what is best for all of them
- We just hope we can all reach a consensus that helps them all

BOE Member Duncan commented:

- Thank you for letting us come to present tonight
- My desire is that we can work together as two Boards
- This is a county problem that we have inherited
- Let us work together to come to an agreement and continue to what we have always done and that is - live in the best county in the nation, in my opinion
- Again, thank you for taking the time
- I hope we can actually get some things done tonight and look toward the future for a vision

BOE Member Rogers commented:

- I will keep my comments short and sweet because the other members have already said it
- Thank you for hosting us
- It is good that we can all come together
- We did not get into this problem overnight
- We are not going to get out of this problem overnight
- We are trying to fix the short-term issues while still having a long-term vision
- What that vision is going to be, I don't know because this County looks 180 degrees different than it did when Commissioner Cox and I started serving on the Board of Education in 2010
- It changes quickly, we just have to adapt for it
- We are all in this together

Chairman Morris opened the floor over opening comments from the Board of County Commissioners.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- I will make my comments short here in the beginning with the hopes we will have a second time to speak
- Confirmed with Chairman Morris there will be at least a second time (or more) to speak
- Would like to start by welcoming all the Board of Education members here tonight – good to see everyone
- Hope everybody in attendance in the audience had a good ride to scenic Danbury with the leaves turning – appreciate you coming out on a night that you didn't have to, but made that extra effort to come here to listen about the schools, the Board of Education's proposal, and some of the county commissioners' ideas
- You did not have to come out, you could have stayed at home right now
- Just want to say welcome and when we work our way back around the second time, I will dig into a few questions

Vice Chairman Chandler commented:

- Good evening, everybody, especially those attending tonight in person and to those streaming on YouTube
- Appreciate your participation
- Thanks to the school board for attending tonight's joint meeting – good to see you again
- Think we have a lot on our plate tonight and I will get into more later on in the meeting

- But just a few quick things, sometimes there seems to be a misimpression or a misinterpretation I think on a lot of different sides or different parts of the County
- I will just make it clear that I represent Stokes County, I live in the northern side of the County, but I represent all of Stokes County
- King is in Stokes County last time I checked, and I represent King
- For people to infer just because I live in the northern part of the County, they don't know me, they are wrong
- Just want to get that out there
- If I was a real politician, by someone doing that I might do something in spite – go the other way other than looking at all the different facts
- We will be able to clear a lot of this stuff later on in the meeting

Commissioner Wood commented:

- Welcome everyone tonight especially the school board, it is nice to show that we are not at each other's throat and that we like each other
- It is not your problem we got; it is not my problem, but we have got to solve it
- This started a long time ago and now we know why nobody jumped on it
- It is not going to be easy, and everyone is not going to be happy
- But everyone better get along because that is what we do in Stokes County

Commissioner Cox commented:

- Thank you all for being here and thank you all for watching at home that couldn't be here
- Thank you for taking an interest in what is going on in our County with the schools
- Appreciate the Board of Education coming up here and doing this joint meeting so that maybe we can iron out a few misconceptions as Vice Chairman Chandler said that are out there – there are lots of others not mentioned by Vice Chairman Chandler that we need to iron out
- I think what got us here in the first place, if I remember correctly, was the perception that our Board of Commissioners had some blame of, I will just talk about the “elephant in the room” why consolidation was going to have to happen
- I don't think that was the intent of the Board of Education or any board member in particular, I think people heard what they wanted to hear and don't always understand the funding and how it works with schools along with the Board of Education's role and the Board of Commissioners' role and how that all works
- That had some people talking about how we were to blame, and I am talking about community members not the Board of Education, but it just got all misconstrued and turned upside down
- We, I think, just wanted to sort of have an opportunity to clear the air about how we felt about consolidation, the funding, and how it all works
- Maybe simplify it so people could understand it a little better and what is our role
- I know that when I was on the Board of Education, maybe even before Mike came on, we did a master boardmanship class and really dug deep into the role of being a board member
- Some of that has stuck with me and even served me well as a member of the Board of County Commissioners because the roles are so different

- Sometimes, it is easy to cross the lanes and not stay in our own lane like we should
- The last thing that I would like to see is this Board of Commissioners try to micromanage the Board of Education to a degree that things are done as they have been done in the past and the decisions were made that were not always the best decisions for building schools, adding on to schools, and where to put schools that has kind of led us to where we are today
- Talking about things that were done in the past that we are trying to make up for now or try to kick the can down the road in the past when, you know, it was easier to appease people and try to do that then to do the right thing sometimes – that needs to stop
- We just need to do the right thing
- That is my two cents for now

Chairman Morris commented:

- Would like to welcome everybody
- For those watching online, we have a full room here tonight with most of the seats taken
- That is good, we welcome participation from the public and comments that we just heard that help us make decisions
- Welcome the Board of Education, it is good to meet with you to air out where we are at on all these issues associated with consolidation
- I think each one of us as elected officials probably one of the most important things that we are expected to do, is to be good stewards of the tax dollars that we are given to spend for the various services that are provided in the County
- So, when you have a charter to do that and that is your top priority then you are not going to always agree with people on things
- Might be a lot of times where we have to agree to disagree
- Like Commissioner Wood stated, we are all friends here and none of this is personal
- I think we all feel very strongly about how we do our job and how we handle taxpayer funding
- I look forward to getting into the discussion on the plan that you guys are working on and then we will share some thoughts from the commissioner side

Chairman Morris noted that the joint discussion, as agreed with BOE Chairperson Robertson, will start with Dr. Brad Rice giving us a short update of what the current plan is, then the commissioners will comment after that about where they stand and questions they may have - basically just have open discussion between the Boards to answer questions and so forth.

Chairman Morris turned the floor over to Dr. Brad Rice, Superintendent, for comments regarding the current plan.

Dr. Rice commented:

- Several of you all have already mentioned things that I was going to mention
- Will just get back into it with a little detail
- This has been a long process for the Board of Education that started in 2021 with an enrollment study that looked at past enrollment as well as future projections
- Then you commissioned the facility study that took place in the 2022-23 school year

- Don't believe anyone was shocked by the results of the study – we know we have older facilities
- Then we did two efficiency studies – the Masonboro Group and ORED-NC State
- Since then, the Board of Education has been discussing different options, potential options, held a public hearing, and going through that
- The three issues that our Board of Education has tried to address in this process:
  - Overall declining enrollment in our schools
  - The divided services that we have especially in our elementary schools due to small schools
    - The art, music, and physical education teachers that are divided out, there are not enough students in one school to just serve one school
    - Counselors are divided out
    - Nurses are divided out – it is great if you get sick on the day the nurse is there, but what about the four days a week the nurse is not there
  - Maintaining of nineteen (19) school facilities
    - As Commissioner Cox stated there is a special tax rate that goes into funding facilities which is something that statutorily happens
    - While the taxes have increased through the years, not really at the rate of inflation
    - So, trying to maintain nineteen (19) facilities with the tax dollars that come from sales tax, it is a losing battle
- As you know, the results of the facility studies started off showed:
  - Have six (6) schools that were at least partially built in the 1950s
  - Have some schools that I call “franken schools” that have components that were built one year and other components that were built in different years
  - You have new parts and old parts
  - At least part of the existing structures:
    - Had six in the 1950s which is the most of any decade
    - Had two built in the 1960s
    - Had three in the 1970s
    - Had four in the 1990s
    - Had one in 2000s
    - Had two built in 2010s
    - None after the 2010s
  - With that, the facility study came back that it would take between \$50 and \$90 million to renovate all those schools
- With that and all of those combined, our Board of Education decided to discuss closing three schools:
  - Pine Hall Elementary School
  - Pinnacle Elementary School
  - Lawsonville Elementary School
- That being a first step in this process
- While that discussion was going on, the discussion came up with using all of that information to apply for a grant to rebuild King Elementary School that would hold many of the students from Pinnacle Elementary School that had been discussed closing
- That was a concurrent conversation that went on with consolidation

- Not necessarily tied together, but certainly can be tied together
- As I spoke to you all last week, part of the grant criteria that moves or gives you a higher grant rating, if you will, is if consolidation is part of it
- So, if the Board does vote to close Pinnacle, that would strengthen that grant application
- If they vote not to close Pinnacle, we will still apply for the grant; we still believe we have a strong case for it, but consolidation would strengthen the application
- So those are concurrent conversations, concurrent decisions that do go together but also don't go together
- The next phase we would look at after the debt comes off in about seven years
- At the way that things go these days, we know that there may be commissioner turnover, there may be Board of Education turnover, there may be superintendent turnover, so our Board did not look to make hard plans in cement for seven years or eleven years down the road
- Again, as BOE Member Rogers said that the last ten years haven't been the same for Stokes County as they were the previous ten years
- While there are some thoughts about that – the thought was to take this as an initial step and then make an additional step later
- That is my opening comments

Chairman Morris opened the floor for commissioner comments starting with the two previous school board members.

Commissioner Cox commented:

- After seeing the grant application for rebuilding King Elementary, I think it is pretty obvious that you were doing everything that you could to maximize your chances of getting this grant
- There is no reason to apply for grant for a school that you don't think you can get it for
- Obviously, this does make the most sense to try to get the grant funding because \$38 million handed to you for \$2 million, have to agree with our public speaker, that is pretty substantial
- In my whole time on the Board of Education, I don't know that we ever got any money to build a new school
- Reiterated that is pretty substantial to be able to get a grant like that
- I do remember from the facility study King Elementary was recommended to be replaced first because of the security issues, the safety of students being on a spread-out campus, the flooding, and numerous other things
- I have asked some questions of BOE members and Dr. Rice in between their other meeting and this meeting today about the feasibility of putting this new school at Pinnacle versus at the King location
- I am not married to the idea that it has to be in King
- They brought up an interesting point that I had not thought about which is that water and sewer are not extended to Pinnacle
- That is a problem, when it comes to replacing school buildings or building schools, which is having city water and sewer – it makes a big difference



- I know that when I was still on the Board of Education, we talked about relocating it between King and Pinnacle which I think that has been already looked at – trying to find a more central location
- So that if you build a school and you combined schools then it is a new school for everybody – that kind of gives everybody on the same playing field coming in
- I like that idea, but I also know that twenty acres between King and Pinnacle is going to cost you a lot of money
- I haven't seen any land, used to look for options when it was discussed when I was on the Board of Education
- Couldn't find land then and sure there probably is not any land available now
- I would have liked that idea if it was feasible, but I don't think that is
- I know that you all have done your due diligence with trying to find the best location
- I know that some things have been mentioned about congestion and the traffic in the King area and what a new school there would mean
- I feel the City of King has to look into that – their issue that they need to figure out a way to resolve if it is a problem
- It is twice a day for about 45 minutes a day – it is not like it is an all-day issue
- I know that King Police Department has been really good to help you all with traffic situations
- Personally, I am in favor of applying for the grant to replace King Elementary
- I can't think of any reason not to try to get it
- We may get it, we may not get it
- It is safe to say that if we don't get the grant, we won't be building the school
- I do think that we have to plan and strategically plan as two Boards and what we are going to do if we don't get the grant
- We still need to build a couple of elementary schools and consolidate some schools just because these buildings are so old but at the same time how do you do that without interrupting the lives of 400 kids versus 100 kids
- I know you have thought of that – that is your job, not our job
- That is why I said that in the beginning, I don't want it to come across as we are micromanaging
- But at the same time, it is like Chairman Morris stated, we are stewards of the public trust and the purse
- We do have to be mindful of that
- With that being said, trying to get \$38 million free with only a \$2 million investment is a very good investment in my book
- I would like to reserve any other comments for later

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- I think everyone here knows my love for education, my love for children, 36 years in the business that I enjoyed every minute of it
- Used to come up here with Board of Education
- Retired in January 2016 from the school system
- Didn't know how good retirement was, retired in January and in June that year was in London, England and Paris, France

- What got in my head – sitting up here now
- I would like to ask a few questions
- I retired in January 2016, ran, and won the election for county commissioner in November 2016 – a quick turn from education to county commissioner which as Commissioner Cox already stated is a lot different
- Part of our differences, as Commissioner Cox stated, is being good stewards of the county money
- The county taxpayers expect us to try to handle their money in a wise way
- I think the Board of Education understands that
- I don't think you can go up to any taxpayer and they would say that we can spend the money any way you want to – we don't care
- The taxpayers care how their tax dollars are spent
- I am going to go over just a few facts and then I am going to ask a couple of questions
- For all the people in the audience and for those watching, the County's total debt for schools right now is \$22,461,798.76
- That is what the County owes for the following:
  - Community College – Early College
  - Poplar Springs Elementary School
  - Southeastern Middle School – addition
  - Lawsonville Elementary School – addition
  - Nancy Reynolds Elementary School
- Some land had to be purchased for some of these projects – only a few
- Reiterated the total current school debt is \$22,461,798.76
- Annual payments are made for this debt from the county budget
- The fiscal year 2023-24 debt payment for those projects is \$2,885,289.99
- Wanted everyone to know what the current school project debt was – obtained these numbers from Finance Director Lankford and Interim County Manager Brown
- Confirmed with Finance Director Lankford the numbers that I just stated were correct
- The Board of Education has a stuff job
- During my five years being superintendent, we went through a school closing
- Confirmed with Commissioner Cox that she was serving as a Board of Education member during that school closing
- Consolidation and closing a school are never easy
- If you believe in your heart that you are not going to make anyone upset, you are going about it in the wrong direction – you can't do that
- You know that because you have been working through this quite a while; however, I will say this, I looked at the website tonight before I left home, and I think your enrollment on your website showed 5,519 students – please correct me if I am wrong
- What I have done to let everyone know, the belief for consolidation that our Board of Education has been dealing with, expressed appreciation to Chairperson Robertson and the Board for the hard work done regarding the consolidation thus far, I have done a comparison study of six counties around us regarding their number of schools and students versus the number of schools and students in Stokes County
- Provided both Board members with a copy of the comparison
- Want to make a brief statement of why I did this

- I retired from being superintendent on January 31, 2016
- Dr. Hobbs came in and filled out the remainder of the year, Dr. Rice has been here since
- In May of that year following my retirement in January, I received a call from Dr. Cotton, Superintendent, from Henry County, Virginia
- Dr. Cotton had a situation with 14 schools – 13 had met growth and one had not – he needed that school to grow
- Dr. Cotton ask me to come up to talk and then asked me to do an interim principalship for that particular school that had not met growth – I accepted that appointment
- That perked me up, I talked Todd Martin and several other people – Travis Reeves – made some trips together when we had our consortium at UNC- Greensboro
- As you can see on the comparative study: (had Interim County Manager Brown call each school systems' central office to obtain these numbers)
  - Surry County
    - 20 schools with approximately 7,000 students
  - Yadkin County
    - 14 schools with approximately 5,009 students
  - Rockingham County
    - 23 schools with approximately 11,000 students
  - Caswell County
    - 6 schools with approximately 2,173 students
  - Patrick County, VA
    - 7 schools with approximately 2,350 students
  - Henry County, VA
    - 13 schools with approximately 6,961 students
  - Stokes County
    - 19 schools with approximately 5,500 students
    - To be exact, I think the total is 5,519 students
- When you take the number of students divided by number of schools
  - Surry County = averages 350 students per school
  - Yadkin County = averages 357 students per school
  - Rockingham County = averages 478 students per school
  - Caswell County = averages 362 students per school
  - Patrick County = averages 357 students per school
  - Henry County = averages 535 students per school
  - Stokes County = averages 290 students per school
- Want the people in the audience to understand why the Board of Education is working so hard on consolidation
- 290 students per school for Stokes County
- You did not hear any other of these six schools that surround us below 350 – Surry County has 350 students per school
- The reason that I included Patrick and Henry Counties is real simple – if you know Stokes County like I do, drive past Sandy Ridge Elementary School about a mile and a half, and confirmed with BOE Member Duncan that you will enter Henry County, VA
- I worked in Henry County as an elementary school principal
- Go past Lawsonville Elementary School and past Peters Creek Church, confirmed with BOE Member Duncan that within a mile you will enter Patrick County, VA

- Wanted everyone to see that we have more schools with less students than surrounding counties
- Wanted that out there for facts along with the information that I have given you regarding debt
- When we did Poplar Springs and Southeastern Middle School, believe Commissioner Cox and BOE Member Rogers were both on the Board of Education, we got out money through a model called QSCB and QZAB which gave the County a better deal
- I will finish up here just by saying, I have listened to your last six board meetings, do you have a finalized plan currently for the consolidation of schools that you would make public to everybody in the county – question one to Dr. Rice and Chairperson Robertson
- Second question – did a new roof get put on King Elementary School recently – when was the last roof put on King Elementary School

Chairman Morris noted that the Board of Education could hold off answering commissioner questions until after all the commissioners' comments in order to give the Board of Education time to respond.

Director of Maintenance/Facilities Richie Roberts responded to Commissioner Mendenhall's question that the last roof was put on King Elementary School in 2007.

Commissioner Mendenhall continued:

- Have been in that school many times when I served as superintendent, seeing teachers, principals, custodians, - tried to meet with everyone
- Was in King yesterday and drove through the entire King Elementary School property – even though I had been there many times in my life, I wanted to refresh my memory before our joint meeting tonight
- King Elementary School and Sandy Ridge Elementary School are old schools
- I was principal at Sandy Ridge Elementary School for three and a half years, I know how old that school is
- I guess my question is – what happens if the county commissioners agree to give you the \$2 million for the grant and if you don't get the grant, this is sort of kind of hypothetical, so you may not be able to answer this question at this moment

BOE Chairperson Robertson noted that the \$2 million is not due unless we do get the grant, so if the grant doesn't come through, there is no \$2 million upfront.

Commissioner Mendenhall continued:

- Confirmed with BOE Chairperson Robertson that you do not have to put the \$2 million up front
- My other question is – what will you do with the current King Elementary School if you don't get the grant to build a new King Elementary school – need the Board of Education to be thinking about that
- That is all right now

Vice Chairman Chandler commented:

- I want to start by saying that education is vital, it is paramount

- I think for any city, any community, any county – you have to have a good education system
- It not only sustains the quality of life and community involvement, but it also advances it
- If you don't succeed in the level of opportunity for our students, our future leaders, then eventually it will show with the leadership in the county and then we will all fail – it will be a failure
- We all know that we have to consolidate schools, been talking about it for years and years, long before I ever thought about running for the Board of Commissioners
- At some point in time, we have to sit down, and you have to plan
- I thought we kind of did, the Board of Education did their internal planning going back and forth; then funding was allocated for the Masonboro Report that was done, the ORED Report that was done, and the facilities report that was done
- The level of need to our infrastructure here in Stokes County is shocking
- Shocking and I do not want to blame anyone because it doesn't do any good
- We have the problem now and we have to solve the problem
- I am ready to solve the problem – at least help solve the problem
- I don't even blame the past Boards because they all just went on what the citizens wanted which was low taxes
- If the citizens were not happy with the quality of life that was going on, they would not have kept voting them back in
- Everyone just keeps voting them back in, so apparently it is not their fault
- It is not like they ran on the fact that they were going to change things and did not change things
- I ran on changing things
- I am just one vote, but I am also one mouth, and I am going to do whatever I can to change things and help lead change in Stokes County so we can get caught up in the 21<sup>st</sup> century
- The frustrating thing is that we just don't have to look after the local part of the school funding, we got a whole county to run
- Our public safety does a great job with what they have, I come from law enforcement, and our public safety is forty years behind - forty years behind
- Do you know what struck me yesterday – I was on the school system's website
- We are approximately only a couple of miles from the school system's central office, the difference between our computer system/network/computer capabilities and yours is shocking
- It is like we are back in 1979 and you are actually current in the 21st century with your capabilities
- But yet we send half, which is dedicated right off the top of what is received from property taxes revenue straight down the road
- Department of Social Services and Health Department are overwhelmed
- If we just had to sit here and say automatically to just take the money because we got a lot of money – just do it – but the issue is that we don't have the money
- We represent the whole county
- I want to get the school situation right

- I will say right up front that I don't mind finding the \$2 million to give you all, but I want to know where you are going to put the school and I realize you have stated on the same location but a different area
- I see the traffic congestion but like Commissioner Cox stated it is probably just two hours a day – maybe King can work through that
- Forgive me if I don't sound confident because when you lack strategic planning, and I am talking about us first – this County has never done strategic planning, but we are going to start
- I like to see plans
- Where I came from, we had projections to review regarding operational and budget planning
- It may be 2023, but I am already looking in the year 2026 – looking at revenue and known expenses that we have – looking at what we want to accomplish
- I understand what you all may say that we may not be here in five years and you all may not be here in five years, but that is no excuse in my opinion
- You still make plans, and it is up to the other people that come on the Boards to either run with it or run against it but then they are held accountable
- The way I think, and I know that I am a little bit different, I am just going to do the right thing and if they want to vote me off or if I don't want to run again and somebody takes my seat and says that guy was crazy – we are going back to 1988 again then that is fine
- That is the citizens that either voted them in or voted them out
- That is the way I look at it and that is the only way to operate an organization in my opinion – it is leadership
- We are not all going to get everything we want but if we plan and if we articulate I think to our people that we represent, we are not going to please everybody, but I think when we are leading a certain way then I can sit back and hold my head high and say this is what our intent was
- I have other comments but to move on quickly, one question that I have is your ideal student population number for elementary schools and for high schools
- Another question, like Commissioner Mendenhall stated, if we don't get the grant what are you going to do about King Elementary School but I want to take it a step further
- I appreciate BOE Chairperson Robertson and Dr. Rice inviting me to take a tour of King Elementary School about three weeks ago
- Even when I am on my tractor, I am thinking about what is going on in Stokes County everyday
- Since that tour I think about that school every day, that school should not be in operation in my opinion
- I know that I am not on the Board of Education, but in my opinion, that school needs to be closed
- When Poplar Springs Elementary School was built, wasn't it built so that you could add on to it – confirmed by BOE members that it was built to expand
- I haven't heard anything about adding on to Poplar Springs Elementary School, was that ever discussed during the planning
- I believe there is extra property in the front of the current school – Highway 66

BOE Member Rogers responded:

- There is enough property there to build a middle school, there is enough property there to add on, the problem is that we don't have the money as a county to do it
- There is not a grant out there to just add on to one elementary school

Commissioner Wood questioned why could you not just add another elementary school there.

BOE Member Rogers responded:

- Then you come into a bigger traffic congestion because Poplar Springs currently has 500 students with one road in and out into a two-lane road – it is not in King

Vice Chairman Chandler continued:

- I see the Sheriff's Office there all the time directing traffic

BOE Member Rogers responded:

- Yes, they are there for 500 students
- If you add King Elementary, you have just doubled that school
- So now you are putting more students at Poplar Springs than is currently at West Stokes
- When it was designed, it was designed to hold up to 700 students – core capacity
- It is at 500 now with approximately 440 students at King Elementary
- It is not big enough

BOE Member Knight commented:

- It is my understanding that there are grants for additions or new construction, questioned Dr. Rice as to whether this was correct – think that question has come up before

Dr. Rice responded:

- There are new construction grants and there are some for renovations
- School system recently received the \$5 million from this particular grant for roofs
- But primarily the goal of this grant is for new construction

BOE Member Rogers responded:

- So, if we added on to two elementary schools, we would have to receive two grants which would come out to the same cost as one new elementary school

BOE Chairperson Robertson responded:

- Back to Vice Chairman Chandler's question regarding desired student capacity at an elementary school
- It is my understanding, Dr. Rice, please correct me if I am wrong, the state average is about 450 students for an elementary school with the sweet spot being around 400
- I think if we added on to Poplar Springs Elementary School and took it to core capacity and had 700 to 800 students, we have an elementary school principal here, Dr. Rice and Commissioner Mendenhall would even say that 800 elementary students would be hard to manage
- Believe that would be what you would run into – trying to put too many students in one location

Dr. Rice responded:

- Especially when you think about it, while the core capacity is what it is, if there are 40 classrooms in a school for an 800-student school with an average of 20 students per classroom, those students would also have to go to specialty classes such as art, music, and physical education
- You could not get all those in a week, so you would have two art classrooms, two music classrooms, two gyms
- When you start getting into those size schools, for example, West Stokes has an auxiliary gym in order to hold the physical education classes
- Basically, you have to start having to double the school once you get into that size
- The 300 to 500 student school range is the ideal range with 400 being the sweet spot
- High schools would be 600 to 1,000 students to offer the things that you would want to offer - a good efficient school

Vice Chairman Chandler continued:

- So, in terms of closing King Elementary School and you had to close King Elementary School, not saying you do because you make that decision, but if something came up and you had to, what would be the plan regarding transferring students from King Elementary between Pinnacle and Poplar Springs or where else – you know the schools better than I do
- Is there a way to do that

Dr. Rice responded that there is always a way.

Chairman Morris requested to allow all commissioners to speak before answering questions.

Vice Chairman Chandler continued:

- One last thing, have had several people from the Walnut Cove area talked to me (not the mayor) asking me why Walnut Cove can't get a new elementary school
- I replied that was not my area but will certainly ask
- They also commented that Dr. Rice had made a comment during one of his presentations that he had thought about a new elementary school in Walnut Cove which you can answer later

BOE Chairperson Robertson noted that the Board of Education has thought about all these questions over and over the past months and have run every scenario over and over, haven't heard a question yet that we haven't already talked about and discussed.

Commissioner Wood commented:

- As of January 2, 2024, I will have 52 years in the construction business selling steel
- I have seen more schools built and furnished them than you all have ever seen
- I am project managing two schools right now in the eastern part of the state
- King needs a school; I don't want to argue with you
- I can't see a \$30 million school going on that site



- You are going to look at 10% for tearing down that old school to whatever it costs to build a school
- I deal and talk to school contractors everyday
- I am not going to quote and don't ask me, but I got square foot prices and hope you have
- I get updates on the lottery
- I have got a spreadsheet on the bonds that Mecklenburg County and other counties have gotten
- I just hate the site
- Come up with another site, please
- The question that I don't understand and would like explained in detail (I am sure you all have heard me say this before – I went through consolidation with North and South Stokes) I don't see how you can do this without redrawing the lines
- That is the part that blows my mind – I don't get it
- This is a change for everybody, I survived it, and I turned out alright
- I thought I was going to Lawsonville High School, then consolidation was done, and I was attending North Stokes High School
- I am for King, have family in King, I go to King
- You need a plan because King Elementary School (confirmed with Dr. Rice the oldest part was built in 1950) is old
- So, you are going to build a school on a site that is going to sit there 50 to 70 years, that is why the site selection has to be perfect, that is my construction view of it
- I have even bounced it off some builders who are familiar with it and their comments were – they are not going back there, are they
- Please reconsider the site selection

Chairman Morris commented:

- I have a few comments then we will let the Board of Education members respond to the earlier questions
- The fact of putting up only \$2 million for a \$38 million grant is a no-brainer
- I think our speaker made that comment and have also heard that from other places
- We agree that is a no-brainer
- To me, a bigger issue would be to get that grant and not spend it wisely
- I am not in near as big a hurry to get the grant as I am to figure out how we would spend it wisely and then get the grant
- Whether that would be this year or that be next year or whichever year because grants are available each year from this fund to you
- I don't think we have a great chance of getting it
- The criteria which they call the prioritization of what they are looking for to award the grants - seven priorities
  - Number one - Counties that are designated as development tier one areas
  - Number two - Counties with greater need and less ability to generate sales tax and property tax revenue
  - Number three - Counties with a high debt-to-tax revenue ratio
  - Number four - The extent to which a project will address critical deficiencies in adequately serving the current and future student population

- Number five – Projects with new construction or complete renovation of existing facilities
  - What Dr. Rice noted that they are primarily focused on new construction or complete renovations
- Number six - Projects that will consolidate two or more schools into one new facility
- Number seven - Counties that have not received a grant under this Article in the previous three years
  - Understand with new language, this will not apply to the application
- When you look at those criteria and what we have
  - We have a low debt-to-tax revenue ratio this year at approximately 10% - calculated annually (don't believe we would score high in this area because we don't have a high debt-to-tax ratio)
  - We are tier two county, and they are looking for tier one counties
  - As I understand it, your plan does not consolidate two or more schools into one new school – your plan takes an existing school and consolidates one other school into the new school
  - To me, you are closing an elementary school in each of the high school districts and building a new school in King at the existing location
  - In my opinion, your plan does not address critical deficiencies inadequately serving future student population because the plan has no future phases to it other than the one mentioned by Dr. Rice – seven years from now we are going to do something when the debt gets paid off
- Personally, if I was evaluating the grant with the current school plan, it does not seem to me that you would score every high
- Board of Education members can comment if desired
- Kind of interested regarding our previous discussion when I was county manager and we saw these big decreases in student population, and I asked how low does the population have to get before we start seeing some cost reduction in funding the schools – county funding
- Dr. Rice gave a good answer, he basically said that there is certain fixed cost with 19 schools and so forth
- I think that kind of got this discussion going, people thinking about this
- Now if you ask anyone, they say we have to do consolidation
- I think what Commissioner Mendenhall stated regarding the surrounding schools kind of backs that up
- But it seems to me that our discussion has moved from the strategic plan that we asked for – what I am looking for is a comprehensive, long-range plan that will allow us to do the needed budgeting
- It has shifted from that to – we have got to meet the grant deadline this year
- To me, I would not agree to separate the grant from the strategic planning that needs to be done
- To me, the grant is a component of a long-range strategic plan
- I think Masonboro gave us an example of what a long-range strategic plan looks like

- I think another issue which I think has been mentioned a couple of times tonight already, based on Dr. Rice's presentation at our last commissioner meeting, it seems to me it is a real high priority to do something with King Elementary now
- If you build a new school in that location, I assume those kids would still be there for four or five years till we get that done
- That issue with King Elementary looks like it is something that needs to be addressed next year if I was sitting in you guys' seats – getting those kids somewhere besides where they are at just based on all the pictures and descriptions that were presented at our last commissioners' meeting – the condition of that school
- Along with comments that Vice Chairman Chandler has made, I would make that a high priority of figuring some way to address that issue as well
- Would like to talk about the Masonboro Report, I have funded a lot of projects prior to getting to local government along with some being in local government
- Something like the Masonboro Report is like something that I would require before I would fund much of anything basically
- It is a comprehensive report, it has got long-range phases in it, (believe there are seven)
- A set of important criteria which are as follows:
  - To ensure that the study was done in a manner that would demonstrate objectivity the following criteria will be utilized:
    - 70% capacity or greater of each elementary school facility
    - Reduction in bus transportation cost
    - Improve cost effectiveness of school food services
    - Reduction in school facility operation
    - No child moved more than once to another school
    - Improve student education opportunities and achievements across the county
  - With all due respect, I don't think the plan you have given does not explain how any of the criteria listed in the Masonboro Report has been accomplished
  - Not saying that the Masonboro Report that was submitted is a perfect product
  - To me, it is a phase one of a discussion that should continue with Masonboro
  - Masonboro does this for a living – they are experts at this
  - Our Board and your Board are not experts at doing consolidation plans
  - You have the additional burden, the elected officials on your Board, of just about anything you do will be perceived as biased, political, and favoring some elected officials' agenda
  - I don't think you could hardly produce a report that wouldn't be interpreted by a significant number of people depending on who got taken care of and who didn't
  - I will go back to the no brainer comment, you have got to have an objective from a third-party set of experts to give you a plan based on input that you have given them
  - It doesn't have to be the first product that they deliver, it could be iterative process
  - That is what I am looking for – something that I can hand to Carter Associates for a funding strategy that will work for both the school system and the County
  - Just don't think you can do that with what you have presented so far at this point
- I believe the Masonboro Report suggests building an East Stokes Elementary School

- Why not other areas in the County, there is more than one option other than just building a new elementary school back in the same location in King
- To me, that seems like we are not really consolidating like we should – not really changing anything, we are just kind of doing the status quo
- We did this a few years ago with Nancy Reynolds Elementary – all this political, community movement – got to build that school right back in the same location because of some grant money the school receives annually from the Reynolds Foundation
- I think everyone can have an opinion regarding whether that decision to build it back in the same location was the right thing to do – is it sitting in the right location now that benefits the County
- I really feel like if we put this new school right back in that congested area that has the issues that it already has, I would be explaining to people long after I leave local government and why I did that
- I have a real problem putting it back at that location
- I am all in favor of supporting a grant to do a plan that is logical and makes sense and supported by lots of data
- I don't think we are there with the current proposal that you currently have
- At the last commissioner meeting we had, a lady flagged me down in the hall as I was coming in who is in the room tonight
- Her question was "is there any way you can make them start all over with this plan"
- I responded "no" that is not the way this works – we can't do that
- We do have a financial piece to play in this, so we do have some leverage with what happens with this
- I have never had any issue while serving as county manager or commissioner where I have had as much unsolicited feedback regarding the current plan that the BOE has
- It has all been negative
- I have had two or three people during the past week, call and lobby me to put the school back in the same location in King, otherwise, I have had lots and lots of input from folks that don't think it is well thought out; they don't understand why this one is getting this and this one is getting screwed; and they don't think the BOE has listened to their input
- The BOE had the decision to apply for the grant before holding a public hearing
- The BOE only had one public hearing and all the stakeholders out there in the County are making comments about that
- At least, they are telling me they are not being heard
- With all the public input that has come in, nothing has changed on the plan
- I am just reflecting exactly what has been said from the people who have contacted me personally
- After reading the Masonboro Report several times, even reread the report this past weekend, to me, it is just what I was looking for
- I really hated to hear it was being tossed and the BOE was going to do the plan themselves
- I think I will stop now, will have further comments

Both Boards agreed to a five-minute recess.

Chairman Morris and BOE Chairperson Robertson both called the joint meeting back to order.

Chairman Morris turned the floor over to BOE Chairperson Robertson for comments from the BOE.

BOE Chairperson Robertson started the comments:

- Want to start my comments with the Masonboro Plan
  - BOE has heard the Masonboro Plan thrown around quite a bit
  - Usually, we hear that they like the Masonboro Plan, it is a good, long-term plan just like Chairman Morris just spoke about before the recess, a good strategic plan
  - We were very excited about Masonboro coming to present their plan at our meeting
  - We thought it was going to be really good
  - But what people don't understand sometimes is what is in the Masonboro Plan
  - I am going to just hit some of the highlights – don't have a copy with me tonight
    - Phase one – close King Elementary and Pinnacle Elementary Schools which are both in King with approximately 570 students
      - These two elementary schools were going to be consolidated into Poplar Springs and Mount Olive Elementary Schools
      - Believe Poplar Springs and Mount Olive Elementary Schools would hold another 200-250 students
      - We would have close to 400 students that we have nowhere for them to go
      - To me, right off the bat was a red flag about the Masonboro Plan
      - West Stokes High School would remain the same
      - We would have only two elementary schools with nowhere near the capacity to hold all the students
      - I guess some of the students would be going to Nancy Reynolds
      - I guess the great shift would happen – going from Mount Olive to Poplar Springs from Poplar Springs to Germanton
      - I think it would keep working its way around the county or I don't know where we would put them, it is no telling
      - South District was really messed up, their plan would move Southeastern Middle School to South Stokes High School which would have a 6-12 grade campus with approximately 950 students (975 student capacity); trying to keep everyone separated and keep everything working – there is no way
      - In our plan, we even talked about moving Piney Grove Middle School to North Stokes High School making a campus of approximately 500 students (750 student capacity)
      - Our principals from Piney Grove and North Stokes along with Dr. Rice came to us and said it will not work
      - I think North Stokes Principal Rasey stated a sports car may hold ten people, but it is not designed to hold ten people
      - After we heard the comments from Dr. Rice and the principals stating it was not a good idea to combine Piney Grove and North

Stokes when you have 500 students in a 750-capacity school, I don't know how we could combine Southeastern and South Stokes when you have 950 students in a school with a 975-capacity school

- The proposed plan moved Southeastern to South Stokes, close Germanton Elementary, Walnut Cove Elementary, London Elementary, and Pine Hall Elementary – all four elementary schools would be moved to Southeastern
- You would have only one elementary school in the south district - Southeastern Elementary and one Middle/High School at South Stokes
- West District would end up with two elementary schools – Poplar Springs and Mount Olive
- The North District would stay with Nancy Reynolds Elementary, Lawsonville Elementary, and Sandy Ridge Elementary along with Piney Grove and North Stokes – the North District would stay the same
- That plan would take about 15 years to develop - in the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> year, it talked about an East Stokes Elementary School to be built somewhere on the east side of the county possibly around Dillard
- That would take in part of Pine Hall, Sandy Ridge, part of Walnut Cove, for approximately 350 students
- With the declining population, you may end up in a few years with around 275-300 students for a new school
- Would that be a good idea, I think 10-15 years from now, time will tell if it is a good idea or not – we have discussed the same thing
- The Board of Education Plan does the following:
  - We are going to leave all three high schools the same
  - We are going to leave all middle schools the same
  - We have five elementary schools that we are not going to change mainly because of location, age of the facility, and condition
    - Nancy Reynolds Elementary, Poplar Springs Elementary, Mount Olive Elementary, Germanton Elementary, and Walnut Cove Elementary
  - That leaves us six elementary schools – King Elementary and Pinnacle Elementary in the West District; it leaves London Elementary and Pine Hall Elementary in the South District; it leaves Lawsonville Elementary and Sandy Ridge Elementary in the North District – to work with regarding consolidation
  - We can consolidate one of those schools in each District and have the room to consolidate
  - In the West District, we can't consolidate King Elementary and Pinnacle Elementary into Mount Olive Elementary and Poplar Springs Elementary – there is not enough room
  - In the South District, we can't consolidate Pine Hall Elementary and London Elementary into Walnut Cove Elementary and Germanton

Elementary – there is not enough room (could do one school but not two schools)

- In the North District, we can consolidate Lawsonville Elementary and Sandy Ridge Elementary either direction, but we can't do both
  - Either one of those two schools is only big enough for one of the other schools
  - If we closed Sandy Ridge Elementary and sent them to Lawsonville Elementary, half of Lawsonville Elementary still has to go to Nancy Reynolds Elementary in order to make room for the other students coming from Sandy Ridge Elementary which did not make sense to us
  - We thought it would be better to close Lawsonville Elementary and split them halfway between Sandy Ridge Elementary and Nancy Reynolds Elementary
  - If you close Sandy Ridge Elementary and sent them to Lawsonville Elementary and you take half of Lawsonville Elementary and sent them to Nancy Reynolds Elementary – that half going to Nancy Reynolds is not going to be happy about it, they are having to get out of their school for Sandy Ridge to come and be in their school
- So, when you look at it, it really boils down to a pretty single solution
- When you get outside of that main first round, as I would call it – closing three elementary schools, hopefully getting a grant to build a new school of King Elementary, once you get passed that, a lot of it depends on how much funding we have to work with
- We need to add on to Walnut Cove Elementary or Germanton Elementary if we are going to close London Elementary
- We are going to add on to another school somewhere to do any more consolidation
- There is no other easy way to do it without spending some money
- We think in six or eight years as Commissioner Mendenhall was good to show us the debt – the amount of the payment – the debt is paid out
- Ms. Moore can help me with that, probably in the next eight years or so
- I think in seven or eight years down the road, we will get a better view of what the population is doing, where the population is located, is it in King, in Walnut Cove, is the north side of the county growing or is the north side of the county continuing to decline, will we have to end up having to go with Piney Grove moving to North Stokes and make Piney Grove an elementary school
- Those will be questions that could be answered six or seven years down the road when we get a better picture of where the population is shifting
- I think for us to try to decide that right now - we can say right now that we are going to build an East Stokes Elementary in ten years and we are going to do whatever, but it may not be warranted to do that
- I think it is a little irresponsible on our side to come up with a long-range plan, if I was thinking about funding it, I would say put your funding in place that is going to be generating revenue then in six or eight years, we have got some money to work with
- To tell you right now exactly what that is going to be, I am not sure that anybody can do that

- There has been talk about getting Masonboro back to do another study – they had been given the wrong information
- Well, I will tell you that Masonboro walked the halls of every school we have
  - Confirmed with Dr. Rice that they went and walked the halls of every school and saw what kind of room we had in the schools
  - They walked the halls at Poplar Springs Elementary School, if they thought we could add another 300 or 400 students to Poplar Springs Elementary School, I am not sure what they were looking at
  - To get them back and give them another chance to go back through it again, I don't know that is the right thing to do
- I think we are all in agreeance, everybody in this room that we are going to leave all of our high schools the same, we are going to leave all our middle schools the same, and I think that almost everybody agree that we have got five elementaries that we are not going to touch
  - We are not going to close Nancy Reynolds
  - We are not going to close Poplar Springs
  - Reiterated that there are five schools that we are not going to touch, we can't touch
  - It only leaves us six elementary schools
- That is what it boils down to so we have tried to make a decision on which we thought would be the best, where we are going to affect less students moving them around, we came up with the idea of getting a grant
- If we were lucky enough to win a grant and get \$38 million dollars and we do win the grant then Commissioner Mendenhall that is when the \$2 million is paid, if we don't win the grant, there is never any money forwarded for the grant
- It is a mute point
- It is not an easy decision, BOE Vice Chairperson Bryant and myself will be on the phone I don't know how many times talking about it – discussing what if we do this, what if we do that, and the same with other BOE Board members
- We have been over it many times in our heads trying to figure out what is the best plan
- Like it has been said here tonight, there is no easy plan
- Funding, we met with the commissioners on two different occasions trying to get an idea of how much funding we might would have, could we renovate a school, could we add on to a school
- To this point, we have no idea what funding may be available, have not been told any amount of funding
- So, the plan that we are coming up with and consolidation doesn't cost us any money
- We went out and came up with an idea on our own that didn't cost us any money to do
- It doesn't cost any money to consolidate Lawsonville into Sandy Ridge/Nancy Reynolds
- It doesn't cost any money to consolidate Pine Hall into Walnut Cove/London
- It will cost some money to move some desks, move some books, move some personal items but we don't have to add on or do any kind of addition to the school or renovation in order to consolidate what we are doing right now



- I did the numbers one day, if we close King Elementary School this fall, we would probably be above capacity if we consolidate all those into Poplar Springs, Mount Olive, and Pinnacle
- We would be over capacity before we start in those three schools
- With the way King is growing, we would be in mobile classrooms year one – we don't have the room
- I believe there is a lot of King Elementary people here tonight
- A lot of people would agree that King Elementary is not the best school we have, right and you saw that in your tour
- I want to publicly thank Commissioner Chandler for coming over to King Elementary and walking the school with us
- I think it was very eye-opening for him
- Confirmed with Vice Chairman Chandler that it was shocking
- I even saw some things that I had not seen before
- When Principal Bryant moved the table in the little room beside the office, there is a 6-inch hole in the floor that is a sewer pipe
- Principal Bryant stated that the table is sitting there to cover up the hole in the floor
- We would love to have a different King Elementary, a different place we could put them to provide better for our students
- We don't have choices
- We don't have anywhere to put them
- It is tough decisions
- If we had funding, funding would be great, if we knew how much funding we are going to have in five years from now and how much might be available, then that would be great, we could maybe start making a better plan
- How do we do that, but right now the only thing that we can do is consolidate some schools that doesn't cost any money
- I don't know if I answered any questions or just kind of got on my soap box a little bit
- I hope that I answered some of those questions
- I will address the location of King Elementary School, I will say this too, the comment about congested traffic has come up:
  - A lot of King is congested, but at Poplar Springs Elementary, the School Resource Officer (SRO) stands out on #66 to help people get out of the school because of the number of vehicles coming out of the school – they direct traffic
  - I don't think we have to do that at King Elementary – there are two ways out to exit the school – Kirby Road and Main Street
  - Mount Olive Elementary and Chestnut Grove Middle Schools are located side by side each other – share some of the same parking lots
  - Back at the beginning of school when there was open house – they had to alternate their night for open house – they couldn't have open house on the same night because they could not accommodate all the cars
  - They have to use both parking lots of both schools in order to have an open house and accommodate the parents
  - They scheduled Chestnut Grove on one night and Mount Olive on a different night in order to have room

- If you ever go down Chestnut Grove Road in the morning, the traffic dropping kids off is actually setting out in the street – same when kids are being picked up
- To me, King Elementary is fourth on the list as far as traffic congestion
- If we are worried about traffic, congestion, and safety, then we are probably going to have to do something about Poplar Springs, Mount Olive, and Chestnut Grove before we ever get to King Elementary
- King Elementary is probably one of the better ones
- The problem is where Kirby Road goes into Old #52 – that is a NC Department of Transportation (DOT) problem – that is not a King Elementary problem
- If they would put a stoplight there or do something with the traffic, if you think it is bad around 2:00pm when school is letting out, go by there around 5:00-5:30pm when everyone is getting off work
- The traffic is backed up past the school trying to get out
- That is a DOT problem, do know that the City of King has also been working on that – heard they have been trying to work with DOT
- It is not a King Elementary problem
- The site at King Elementary has 22-24 acres, we can go up the hill where the old high school was
- It is a great area to build a new King Elementary School
- If we are lucky to get a grant or we get funding for a school, we can build a school up there
- Once the school is built, the students from the old King Elementary can be moved over to the new school – don't have to do what we did when we built Nancy Reynolds Elementary – tear the school down, put up mobile classrooms, move the students, build a school, move the students back, tear the pods down, we don't have to do any of that
- We can leave them where they are and then move them to the new school once the school is completed
- To me that is a pretty good plan
- We have got water and sewer
- If we want to move it somewhere between King and Pinnacle, then go find me 20 acres of land that has water and sewer that is not right next Mount Olive or Chestnut Grove or somewhere like that – we will look at it

Dr. Rice added that would be an additional cost to the County because you can't use the grant funding to buy land.

BOE Chairperson Robertson continued:

- I am going to guess that the land we would be buying is probably as much or more than the land that King Elementary sits on is worth
- I will admit that the land that King Elementary sits on is worth some money – 22-23 acres of land in the middle of King
- It is probably worth some money, but the alternatives are slim
- There are not many alternatives
- The sewer in King is not very widespread – is not developed as much as it needs to be

- If we can't get the school connected to sewer, will probably have to buy 100 acres of land in order to have a septic system
- I think Lawsonville had to buy additional land in order to build the septic system up there – confirmed with BOE Vice Chairperson Bryant that additional land had to be bought in order for a septic system
- Now you are getting into more money
- We have thought about a lot of these things
- We do feel like we have put thought into it, it is not a political plan
- Everyone is going to perceive it as political if they want to, but we feel like we are looking after the whole County
- We really don't know how much more that we could do to put thought into it and try to come up with a plan
- I feel like we did a pretty good job coming up with a plan that didn't cost us any money
- We are not coming to you telling you that we need \$15 million to renovate this school to keep it open or we need \$15 million to add on to this school; we figured out a way that we can consolidate and eliminate at least two schools, maybe three, and maybe even build a new school and get rid of the four old schools with no money except for the \$2 million grant match – that is not bad
- Will turn the floor to other BOE members for comments

BOE Member Rogers commented:

- If King Elementary goes away like you said and it needs to
- Now I am upside down with students without figuring in pre-school or EC, I don't have a place to put them because I am in max capacity above Poplar Springs, Mount Olive, or Pinnacle, that is based on core capacity, classroom capacity, and what students are enrolled today

Vice Chairman Chandler commented:

- You just made comments that when you were building Nancy Reynolds and the use of temporary pods

BOE Member Rogers commented:

- We have some at some of the schools right now, like Sandy Ridge, that were temporary in 1974 – they are still there

Vice Chairman Chandler noted that the current Boards are in charge right now so we can't blame somebody else

BOE Member Rogers responded:

- We know that once a pod goes in, it never seems to leave

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Confirmed with Finance Director Lankford that the last payment for the pods at Nancy Reynolds will be paid this year

BOE Member Rogers continued:

- We are using pods for the early college now
- I am data driven, like Commissioner Morris say, I looked at the study that we can go out to 2030 on population – where is it at, where is it going to be, what are the growth areas
- I shared this with Commissioner Cox, King is still in the red, it is still going to be the second largest elementary school in the King Elementary District – that is why we picked King Elementary
- Walmart didn't build somewhere else; they chose King because that is where the majority of the people are
- We are trying to keep the schools closer to where the students are; building a school to bus a child to it is kind of ludicrous
- You need to be where the people are – it is just a common business model
- Right now, if you follow the Masonboro plan, they are wanting to redraw district lines that puts 350 at North Stokes, 350 at South Stokes, and 500 at West Stokes
- But they also said that they wanted to be above 70% capacity
- At that point, South Stokes would be right at 35-40%, North Stokes would be about 40%, West Stokes would be at about 50% capacity
- Trying to bust it up with the numbers we have got – we are down approximately 1,400 students from 2010 – down a lot of students
- Looking at a 10-year projection, if you look at the numbers projected of students that are in the system, this is not a guess, these are in our system now and when they get to high school, here is where they would be:
  - Between North Stokes and South Stokes, you are going to have about 600 kids
  - A board in 7 to 10 years is going to have to either build a new East Stokes High School to get a manageable number or we renovate a high school and put everybody into two
- The Masonboro Plan also called for something that I found kind of humorous – Career and Technical Education, although, we are taking students and spreading them out and having fewer students per school, they are wanting to add a drone technology class, an agricultural diesel trucking mechanic class at South and an animal science one and two, an equine science, and veterinary assistant at North
- They are wanting to add classes when we get reimbursed per students
- Right now, our CTE, we are running right about all we have got but yet the numbers are going to go down so how are we going to add more services with less money
- It is kind of like you are faced with Department of Social Services and the Sheriff's Department, I will never forget about 5 years ago, I heard Commissioner Morris say when he was still the county manager – every service comes with a price tag, are you willing to pay it
- As we add services, we would have to add a price tag
- Part of the Masonboro Group Plan was also to add a quarter cent sales tax
- We tried that, it did not work
- I don't know if you guys want to revisit that because we are not a taxation authority -we don't have that power
- We can all talk about it but again it becomes money

- What it boils down to – why did we choose King - because that is where the key people are
- Why don't we move King Elementary, we need the money to buy property to put a new school
- When we come and hear that funding is an issue and we understand
- It is public record that the fund balance isn't the greatest in the world
- We are trying to do with what we have got and be good stewards of the taxpayers' money
- When you look at our budget submission, we give you a copy every year
- We didn't do anything but just a cost-of-living increase based on what we thought projections were going to be
- Trust me, if there is one accountant that I trust more than anybody in this world is sitting in the room today
- This is kind of where we are looking at – King is full, and we don't have any place to put it
- We are looking at a train wreck and we are just sitting here going how do we get out from underneath it
- Our grant is our buying a lottery ticket
- We are hoping we get it
- We are hoping that you all fund it, but if we don't get it, we are still upside down with no place to put them unless we move every student in Stokes County around to shuffle the deck
- At the public comments, you heard parents that did not want to move their kid, you are going to hear everyone one of them because now every child's nucleus of support and friends are now busted up for half of the County
- Because half of the County is in the northern district (King is only 18%) which covers 50%; Walnut Cove – South District (33 as far as students versus land mass size)
- So, Ms. Knight was right – we don't want to put kids on the buses any longer and I agree with that
- We don't want to make boundary lines any further to where we are having to bus kids further and a greater distance because they are already on the bus too long – we are just dealing with it
- If there are any other questions, go for it

Vice Chairman Chandler responded:

- I get with what you are saying, I get with what BOE Chairperson Robertson is saying, and I get with what Superintendent Rice is saying
- I don't have a problem with some of what you are saying, we have had conversations, we are wanting to know what your recommendations are
- What you are trying to do is play both worlds
- You are saying that you went ahead and came up with your own plan
- When we asked you doing the budget time, how much money do we have to have for renovations or how much money do we have to do this – that is not the way it works
- The way it works is you say what you want to do that you think is the best thing and you give us what that price tag is going to be, or you bring us options like we are going

through right now – it is in writing so we can have conversation when we are in the budget season

- Ideally, we would get it and put it in as a part of a strategic plan, so it is not tomorrow
- I think sometimes what we do is we sit, and we are the same way
- We set and we talk, and we are not talking with you all; you all are talking too but you all are not talking to us
- Then it comes to a boiling point to where we need action, we need a signature that says that we will fund the grant match
- Again, I am for the grant
- I am also for moving King Elementary students like asap
- No one has ever come to me in the position of a board commissioner saying that we have got to do something with King Elementary, it is a priority, come take a tour
- When I got the offer to tour King Elementary, I went
- Something needs to be done but you all aren't focused on that, you are focused on just building another school near King Elementary but yet the school is so bad, but you are willing to wait 8 years with these kids going to that school until we can free up debt
- That don't seem that urgent to me
- I don't have a kid that goes there or a grandkid that goes there
- I am upset, that should not be – that is what I am talking about
- I agree with what BOE Member Rogers is saying, you are exactly right, you are reading the stats

BOE Member Rogers questioned if we should come next week and ask for money for King Elementary School

Vice Chairman Chandler responded:

- Yes, you should have come last year, or two years ago, or whenever else

Dr. Rice responded:

- So, if we come next week and ask for three elementary schools because that is really what our County really needs

Vice Chairman Chandler continued:

- Show us the plan, show us the money needed

Dr. Rice responded:

- I guess that is the frustrating part because I understand what you and Commissioner Morris are saying – you all believe you get a plan then you look for the money
- I apologize, I was raised in a pastor's family and Luke 14 said don't build a tower unless you know that the cost is beforehand so you know if you can finish it
- I believe if you know what the money is then you can develop a plan that matches the money
- Instead of creating a plan and you all say no – we will have a \$150 million plan, no we can't do that, well then we will do a \$90 million plan, no we can't do that, well then we will do a \$30 million plan , well then we will do another plan

- If the answer is \$10 million, then tell us we have got \$10 million and we will know that we have got \$10 million to work with – we can figure it out
- If we know that we have got \$100 million, we know what we can do to figure it out
- It is hard to make a plan, I don't know anybody that has ever built a house without a budget first
- Even when I am trying to build a storage building, I know how much money I have and then I figure out what size I can build or if I just need to wait and not do anything because I can't build anything

Vice Chairman Chandler continued:

- I know what my needs are and then I go out and get the best price

Dr. Rice responded:

- We have 6 schools that were built in the 50s that are a need, that is not going away, they are 73 years old

Vice Chairman Chandler continued:

- Dr. Rice, I am your biggest supporter
- I agree, but put it in writing and give us some quotes, give us some ideas,
- King Elementary needs to go asap

Dr. Rice responded:

- Again, this is the frustrating thing to me
- I understand how boards work – three votes for a board but different people disagree
- Commissioner Morris has kept mentioning the Masonboro Plan
- Back in the budget season, Mr. Mendenhall said you have wasted your money, give me the money next time that was not worth the paper it is written on basically – it is not an exact quote, but it was close
- That is two people on the same board – one likes the plan, and one did not like the plan
- We have heard from people, we have been asked the question, what about a new Walnut Cove Elementary School or a New London Elementary School or those type things because Dr. Rice mentioned it
- I don't know many things that we have not mentioned
- The only thing that I can think of that we have not mentioned – we have not mentioned closing Poplar Springs Elementary School
- I think every other school at some point has been mentioned with being closed, renovated, or something
- We have mentioned an option of consolidating all three high schools in to one, so every high school has been mentioned
- Every middle school has been mentioned, it is always the comments that it can't happen
- I mean, no matter what we do, you hear those comments

BOE Member Rogers commented:

- Everyone is fine with consolidation as long as it is not their school that they went to or their grandparents went to

Vice Chairman Chandler commented that he knew that we did not have an easy job.

BOE Member Rogers commented:

- The ORED recommendation is that you close North Stokes High School – there is no reason for a high school or a middle school in the northern region of the district
- We know the people do not want that so that became a nonstarter just like the people that don't want to redistrict to pull kids from here to there to go to other places that are further travel times
- It also said that the least effective schools are Pine Hall, Pinnacle, and Lawsonville – so there are your financial dollars
- I am not saying that is our final vote but that is where we leaned with and that is where the consensus of the vote was
- That matches up with the population study that we had on page six that I shared with Commissioner Cox which says that Sandy Ridge is the growing area
- Again, it was all data based, there was hard concrete data
- We can't look out and see the kids that haven't been conceived yet, but we know where the ones that have been born and where they are residing now

Vice Chairman Chandler responded:

- Then of course you know the other thing that is the ace or wild card, I should say, we don't know what is going to happen such as homeschooling increasing, and also if the tax dollars are getting ready to follow the kid

BOE Member Rogers continued:

- So now you can see why we are hesitant planning six years out because Commissioner Mendenhall, Commissioner Cox, and I sat on a Board when Lawsonville was growing and needed to do something, it had 196 students then and ten years later, it has 108 students – remember less than 100 the state stops paying for you anyway

Vice Chairman Chandler responded:

- I disagree, you still have to plan, and then as the years go by, you can always alter the plan
- You don't just plan and lock it up in a cupboard over here and be blind and then in ten years, you open the cupboard to see what the plan is, and find that I need to spend money now
- If you don't have things in writing and you are not planning – we all have budgets
- It is like when you are planning to retire
- Normally a person doesn't wait to start putting money back two years before you want to retire

BOE Member Rogers continued:



- It is hard for us to plan for next year not knowing what the funding is going to be for the next year

Vice Chairman Chandler responded:

- I can't give you funding until you tell me what you want to do
- You give us a plan and we say yes or no

Chairman Morris questioned Commissioner Mendenhall if he had his questions answered yet.

Dr. Rice commented:

- They have a plan, they have consensus on a plan, but not voted on it yet

Commissioner Mendenhall stated to Dr. Rice that he did have questions.

Dr. Rice apologized to Commissioner Mendenhall - just wanting to answer the question.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- First thing I want is for Dr. Rice to repeat what I quoted this summer

Dr. Rice responded:

- You made a statement about the Masonboro Plan, and you said next time, why don't you give me the money, I can come up with a lot better plan than that, I believe that was the quote

Commissioner Mendenhall responded:

- I want to see that in the minutes somewhere because I don't ever remember saying that
- My memory is pretty good even though I am 67 years old

Dr. Rice responded:

- Again, I am not saying it is an exact quote, but I will look online and send it to you

Commissioner Mendenhall responded:

- I never said anything like that

Commissioner Cox responded:

- I would never say never
- I was there too, and you did say something along those lines
- I just heard what I heard

Dr. Rice responded:

- I apologize, it was not meant to be an exact quote

Commissioner Cox noted that it was not your exact words, but it was the gist.

Commissioner Mendenhall responded:

- Don't quote somebody unless you got the exact words

- That is my first thing
- Then I am going to say this, maybe everyone has forgot this, I ask for our Board to come up and hire Andrew and Doug Carter, who are our financial advisors, does anyone else remember that
- They said they would come up with a plan of how much money we had and what our debt ratio would be and what we would be able to do with that money
- Am I correct
- Confirmed with other Board members that was correct – Commissioner Mendenhall suggested to hire financial advisors to come up with a plan
- I was the one that brought that up and it passed on a 5-0 vote
- Confirmed with other Board members that it passed on a 5-0 vote
- Dr. Rice, until we get that group, I cannot sit here and tell you to call out three schools you want built and that I am going to vote yes right now, just can't do that
- You heard me read the statistics and our fund balance is not 25% or 30%, we are talking about probably 12%
- You know in your mind we can't fund three schools

Dr. Rice responded:

- That is why we have not asked

Vice Chairman Chandler commented:

- We are never going to go anywhere in Stokes County with that kind of philosophy of we are all here and there, you have got to have discussion
- Until you get down to the nitty-gritty, where we can figure out how much money it is going to cost, it is not like it is going to get built tomorrow, but we can find a pathway to get the stuff there and get it done
- If we just throw our hands up every single time and just say, you know what, we can't do it, can't do it, that is why we don't plan here, that is why it is a good excuse to say we don't know what tomorrow is going to bring and we don't have any money
- Will Stokes County continue to grow, will our public safety and our departments continue to grow
- With our education system, we will just have more King Elementaries where we will have more students setting in places that they should not be setting in
- Our 911 Center, all our infrastructure will be a mess and then we want to know why
- All the trends that I get in population study is indicating the elderly is moving into Stokes County, people like me – 64 or older

BOE Member Rogers responded:

- Questioned Vice Chairman Chandler if he reviewed the data on the website
- It gives the population study, and it shows in 2030 what our population will be and also where the heat map is now and in 5 years from now
- These are not the elderly; these are children born per the Stokes County Health Department residing in the County and what areas they are in
- It is not going to account for any growth in King because those houses haven't sold yet

Chairman Morris asked if any other Board member had any unanswered questions.

Commissioner Cox commented:

- Don't have any questions at the moment, but I feel like Dr. Rice was fixing to answer a question.

Dr. Rice responded:

- I was just going to answer the questions, as I did write them down
- We have a plan, the Board has a consensus, not an official vote, not unanimous, but as a Board
- The roof at King Elementary School was done in 2007
- What are we going to do if we don't get the grant, I guess we will come to your Board and ask for money
- The needs are not going away if the grant doesn't come through - then an ideal elementary school 300 to 500 students, a high school 600 to 1,000 students
- Have I mentioned a school at London, yes, but again we have mentioned Germanton, we have mentioned London, we have mentioned a lot of schools in the last seven months
- Was that mentioned in a meeting, if you go to other meetings, other things were also mentioned
- Those are the questions that I had that I wanted to make sure we answered

Chairman Morris noted that the Board of Commissioners would have one last round for questions or comments then we will allow the Board of Education to comment unless anyone disagrees – both Boards had no problem with Chairman Morris' suggestion.

Commissioner Cox started off with the following comments:

- I would like to touch on the Masonboro Study that has been mentioned
- I will go on record as saying that I would never be in favor combining, myself personally, South Stokes High School and Southeastern Middle School, as that study says
- The night that he presented, I asked one of those retired superintendents in that group, I asked him to tell me how he would address the athletic situation
- He responded – put the kids on a bus and send them back Southeastern to practice and use the fields at Southeastern
- I said that time would not allow for that, I was on the school board for 15 and ½ years, that is not going to work
- He had no idea as to how the athletic situation would be addressed
- I just don't think that is the wisest idea and with that being said I would not be in favor of doing that at North Stokes High School and Piney Grove Middle School either
- I think we need to do everything we can to keep our high schools and middle schools open
- Another one of the problems that I mentioned to him about the Masonboro Study was when they stated to close and combine Pinnacle and close King and put them at Mount Olive and Poplar Springs, but had no mention in the study of even renovating or adding classrooms

- I was on the Board when we built that school, you can expand it and you did not even mention that in the study which is a huge flaw right there
- Redistricting and uprooting the greatest number of kids for what reason, I think the whole goal should be to limit the number of students that are having to be uprooted in the County
- Moving the students just one time, I am not sure what he means by that, except that they would go to middle and high school at South Stokes

BOE Member Rogers responded:

- They would only change elementary schools one time is what they were trying to get to

Commissioner Cox continued:

- That just doesn't make any sense, with that being said, I do think down the line, an East Stokes Elementary is probably something that we should plan for
- I think these two Board should start regularly trying to plan once a year, strategically planning ahead
- I agree with Vice Chairman Chandler, the planning is a big thing, even if we, like he said, and I have said it before myself, we can plan all day long but none of us may be sitting here in 5 or 6 years, but that does not mean that you don't plan
- I do believe that you do plan and try to come up with solutions; collaborative and strategic planning between our two Boards, I think, is key
- I think that what has happened in the past is that Board members on both Boards were so worried about getting re-elected, they never did the right thing
- I think it is time that we stop that and stop trying to just worry about that and just do the right thing for kids
- At the end of the day, put these students first, like we say that we are going to do
- We just need to practice what we preach on that
- I would recommend that the Board of Education form some type of committee with school personnel and community members, promote community engagement and try to figure out what to do with London – that is a huge thing right there
- We need to figure out some type of preservation committee that needs to be formed
- Even if that school can't be used down the road as a K through fifth grade elementary school, it could be utilized in other ways, the Arts Council has lots of good ideas, art-based elementary schools are huge all across the United States, the Appalachian Folk Schools are huge, and it is something that I know the Arts Council has looked into
- There are a lot of issues for that school
- Planning needs to start now about that school and how to keep that school viable in the community
- I wish the people who get on Facebook and give us a hard time would roll up their sleeves, get involved and do the work instead of just being on there mouthing all the time about what we are trying to do because do we make all the right decisions, no
- We are not going to, but we do try, and I think it is in the best interest of the kids of what we are trying to do here

- It is not our job to micromanage the Board of Education but at the same time, we are fiscally responsible for the funding and have lots of other departments that are way behind times that Vice Chairman Chandler has previously mentioned
- That is all I have right now but do want to thank the Board of Education for meeting with us today

Commissioner Wood commented:

- Will be short
- Number one, I have made the comment more than once that I am overqualified for this job because I have too much common sense
- Questioned what is the square footage for the new King Elementary School, is it going to be the same square footage as the current school

Dr. Rice responded:

- It is going to be a little bigger, we have not got that far in the planning stage or looking at blueprints

Commissioner Wood continued:

- Next question, if you can't tell me live, you can tell me after the meeting, what architectural fees are running now

Dr. Rice responded that he did not have those figures available but would get with Commissioner Wood after the meeting.

Commissioner Wood concluded that is all he had.

Vice Chairman Chandler commented:

- I think I have already said a lot, I just want to emphasize that I am not against you all
- I want to work with you all, you are the experts when it comes to education
- I want to see something put in writing or just tell me some options that has money associated with the options
- If we can't get support to do whatever, then so be it
- In my opinion, you have got to try
- I am going to try very hard, not with just the schools, but with the rest of the County what is in dire need as well
- We have just got to have honest communication, no politics, what is best for the County
- I have to be honest; I was shocked when Commissioner Mendenhall brought up our financial planner, I never knew Stokes County had a financial planner and I was impressed with that
- I want to thank Commissioner Mendenhall for bringing that up
- We just need something that we can show our financial planner, believe he was a prior city planner who has a lot of experience
- He is not going to go on roundabouts, he wants to know exact money, plans, and what all it entails in order to advise the County about financing these items

- That is all for me

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- I don't have much
- I know the Board of Education has a tough job, we have a tough job, all 10 Board members have a tough job
- I certainly don't envy the Board of Education right now
- I don't envy us either, but I don't envy you all especially
- Someone made the statement, and I am not going to do an exact quote, but someone made the statement – no matter how you try to consolidate, some community is going to be upset – not sure which Board member said that, and I am not going to try recall their name
- Somebody made the statement basically that if you close two or three schools and consolidate them into one, the schools that get closed are going to have some upset citizens
- That is just reality, it is reality
- I feel for the Board of Education, I have not gone to any of the Board of Education members and tried to get you to work a certain way because that is your job
- That is not my job
- It is not my job to tell you which schools to close or consolidate
- You have five Board of Education members – that is your decision
- Reiterated that he would not be telling the Board of Education what to do – that is their decision
- That is all

Chairman Morris commented:

- I would just say, based on the feedback that I have had from the public primarily, plus my own opinion as well, compared to Masonboro, I think the current recommended plan is kind of arbitrary and incomplete
- It looks to me like we are just going to close some schools, build a new one, and then wait and see what happens next, then react to whatever that is
- To me, that is not the proper approach to go about this business, it is about process and having a good process to figure this out
- When you do the local solution, nobody wants to redistrict anything, I happen to believe you have to redistrict in order to fix these kind of issues
- Masonboro stated that this was the most complex situation that they had seen, I think, during that presentation
- To me, it further supports the need for having an expert company that does this for a living to come up with the final plan
- I can't believe that you just take the first iteration, and you don't like stuff in it, and you just toss it and go off and do this on your own – makes no sense to me why you would not get them back, give them scenarios, give them your issues, and let the experts who will provide a non-biased, non-political, objective, professionally done plan

- I would encourage folks that are watching us and are in the room here, go read the Masonboro Report and look how they went about doing the recommendation and then compare it to what you have heard tonight about this current plan
- I would disagree with the comment that was made that it is irresponsible to do long-range planning – disagree with that and we have talked about that enough
- I think a lot of the public in a lot of the County has a real problem with what we have come up with so far
- I am willing to work with you all, if you go back to Masonboro and do a couple of iterations with them and they say replace King Elementary School in the same location, I will be right there supporting it
- Just know that without redistricting and perceptions that are going around, I think we really have a lot of work to do collectively to come up with something that I can support
- Like I have said before, I am just one vote on this Board

BOE Chairperson Robertson commented:

- Do have a question, we do hear a lot about redistricting that you just spoke about, what do you mean when you say redistricting

Chairman Morris responded:

- Moving district lines to make the plan work and not worry about how close somebody is to the current school that they go to

BOE Vice Chairperson Bryant responded:

- Could I ask a question to that – do you think that it is okay for a kid that lives across the road from Chestnut Grove to come to the north side of the county

Chairman Morris responded:

- You can't have it both ways, if you are going to support the bigger plan, you can't have everybody going to the closest school to them just because it is convenient

BOE Member Rogers responded:

- You also can't redistrict just to kind of almost fill up a school or back fill for a school that doesn't have the enrolment
- We are not trying to fix an overcrowding, we are trying to fix an over capacity, are we not, that is the whole reason for consolidation
- We have more capacity and older buildings than we have students to fill them
- So, moving students from this area (up here or down here), the Masonboro Plan that everybody thinks is the gospel is taken from the west and the south to put them into the north area so that those schools can be at 50% capacity and south schools can be at 50% capacity and west schools can be at 50% capacity
- We need to get where we are at 80% to 85% capacity to be efficient

Chairman Morris responded:

- May I state that I don't think the Masonboro Report is gospel
- I think it is the first iteration of two or three or four iterations with them that will produce a really good plan for you guys
- It really can't be challenged by anyone – they are going to challenge your plan all day long

BOE Member Rogers responded that basically we followed the ORED Plan.

Chairman Morris continued:

- If they are unhappy about the Masonboro Report or someone like them that do this for a living, that takes an objective, non-political, non-biased look, they have expertise, they do this for a living
- We don't do this for a living, none of you guys do this for a living

Commissioner Cox commented:

- Why would they not have any answers to my questions if they do this for a living
- If they are such experts, why could they not answer my questions

Chairman Morris responded:

- If you don't like them, hire somebody else

BOE Member Rogers responded that the Board of Education did hire someone else, they hired ORED.

BOE Vice Chairperson Bryant noted that the Board of Education had two studies done, not just one.

Chairman Morris responded:

- The ORED was nothing compared to the Masonboro, in my humble opinion

BOE Member Duncan responded:

- ORED was focused strictly on transportation

Chairman Morris added that he felt the ORED Study was a component of the Masonboro Plan.

BOE Member Duncan continued:

- I reached out to Dr. Rice about getting Masonboro back
- Dr. Rice stated it would be \$5,000 for Masonboro to come back to answer questions, not to do an iteration, just to answer questions
- Hope maybe we could do a zoom call for a lesser amount
- We talk about Masonboro a lot, it would be nice to get them back
- There is a difference between a plan and an action
- To be honest, I voted to where we are at today
- Looking at it, was it the best decision, I don't know



- It is one of the hardest decisions that I have had to make, I guess as an adult, almost feels like it
- There is a difference between a plan and an action, and we are taking an action
- I think the consensus of the Board of County Commissioners is we need a strategic plan and that means doing XYZ
- Last time I checked, where we are class size, class offering, what is best for our children and what opportunities they have
- That is what we are about, buildings don't educate a person but being in a building that is fallen like you had said at King Elementary School
- King Elementary School is one of a few that is bad, there are others that are bad as well
- If the Board of Commissioners is asking for a strategic plan, I don't disagree with you a bit
- I think we need to go back to the drawing board because I did notice in all of our plans that we came up with they had us apply for a grant, getting the grant, and building the school
- We are not guaranteed a grant on any of that
- I don't know how many times Ms. Moore has whispered that in my ear when we have talked, we are not guaranteed a grant
- So, I think if that is what I am hearing tonight from everybody is maybe we need to go back to the drawing board and not just make an action and say that is a plan
- We need to know what we are going to do – this, that, and the other to the schools that are being affecting
- Wrote down a few things:
  - Facility condition is one – you can see the facility study just like I can
  - The best they can get is 15 on a scale – it was plumbing, mechanical, and electrical
  - Maintenance Director Richie Roberts can attest to a lot of this
  - I did the same thing that every citizen can do – go through and do simple the simple math
  - Reiterated that the most you can get is a 15 which is the best condition and a 0 if it is bad
  - I am going to read them because anyone can:
    - London Elementary School = 2.5
    - Pinnacle Elementary School = 3.5
    - Sandy Ridge Elementary School = 5
    - King Elementary School = 5.5
    - Pine Hall Elementary School = 6
    - Walnut Cove Elementary School = 7
    - Germanton Elementary School = 8.5
    - Lawsonville Elementary School = 8.5
    - Mount Olive Elementary School = 19
    - Nancy Reynolds Elementary School = 15
    - Poplar Springs Elementary School = 15
  - After all, some of the other elementary schools are not in the best condition
- I guess my thing is as it sounds like to me as one Board member on the Board of Education, before we can go further from the standpoint of maybe getting support from

the Board of Commissioners and do understand that the Board of County Commissioners do not decide the schools to close, we do – we have to decide

- It has been said that we don't listen to the community, I can't speak for everybody, but everybody that I have talked to – they don't like our plan
- I know I don't talk to everybody; I am sure there are people for it, people that are against it
- I know no matter what strategic plan we come up, it is not going to please everybody
- I am a pastor; I understand about not pleasing people
- You have heard the roar in the crowd about one high school
- From a business model, strictly business model, if you are looking at operating a business that is the most cost-effective thing – building one new high school, have the old high schools to be middle schools – have already talked to BOE Member Bryant about this
- You can do that and close a lot of the smaller elementary schools – that being the most effective model
- But I have got to live in Stokes County, there is emotion, and there is that behind the scenes
- It is a balance
- We represent not just the ones in this room but the ones watching, the ones who elected us
- I don't care about getting re-elected
- I told my wife I should have listened to her and not get elected – not run
- I got on the Board of Education to help the students – try to make sure there was not a liberal agenda that was pushed down our kids' throats like what was happening all over America
- I didn't get on the Board of Education to close schools or whatever
- I want to make them better whatever that looks like
- I am not married to what we are doing, at that time when we were going through it, it made sense
- I told Chairman Roberston early into this when we talked about Pine Hall, if we are going to close one, we need to do it in all areas
- Looking back, I don't think that was the right decision, in my opinion, that is my opinion because every area of the County is different
- The north side is different from King
- King is different from Walnut Cove
- At the end of the day, we are one Stokes County, and we have to figure out how to make that work – we have a mountain in the middle of us
- The reason I take this so seriously if you want to stay up late at night watch YouTube, we are not the first people that have consolidated schools, go on YouTube and type in school consolidation
- It has ripple effects in the community, they are not always good
- That is the thing that we have got to focus on is that the decisions that we make just don't affect the 100 or 200 kids in that school, it affects their families, it affects a lot of other things

- Just sitting here listening, my takeaway is we need to come up with a plan that is best for our kids, whatever that price tag is, and figure out from there if we are going to apply for a grant, if we are not, get funding from the County
- That is my takeaway, instead of action, reaction, we have seven plans but instead of having them applied for grants that is when we come to you and say we need money for this elementary school, we need money for this high school
- That is what I took away from it
- Questioned Commissioner Mendenhall regarding when would the Board of County Commissioners have information from the financial advisors

Commissioner Mendenhall responded:

- The Board of County Commissioners has given the financial advisors a deadline to have the information to the Board by the next budget cycle – Carter Associates who were here in the early 2000's
- This should give us information about how much the County can put into schools
- Can't give you an exact time but suspect March would be the earliest

BOE Member Knight confirmed with Commissioner Mendenhall that this would be like strategically planning for all your other county departments – weigh out the needs.

Chairman Morris responded:

- It all boils down to is what we are willing to do – we have a 10% debt to tax ratio
- We could borrow \$300 million if we can justify to Local Government Commission right now

BOE Member Knight commented:

- Confirmed with Chairman Morris that even with the \$2 million match to the grant or \$300 million, both equals an increase in taxes especially with the current fund balance
- Sometimes what I find even more difficult and I am in a more rural area of the County, telling certain communities, families, or students that I am sorry, but your school is going away, and you will be going somewhere else – this may be difficult for you but hopefully you will make new friends and get better with it, etc.
- Oh yes and by the way you still won't have things such as preschool and special needs that we don't have in the northern side of the County right now
- The list goes on regarding the things that are available and not available but you have to go outside the northern district to receive them, continue to have less and try to figure out where we need most to repair poor structures
- It sounds like it is an extremely poor facility that needs great attention as Member Duncan read off from the facilities' list
- This makes it more difficult for me
- As all of you have said, this is a very complex issue
- Solving this problem is not easy
- I just worry without you guys knowing what you can do, all the needs on the table and looking further down the road with a long-range plan

- I have mentioned about putting kids into an older school like we have proposed with this current plan, how long will that last – putting 300 kids in an older school
- An older school that already has 175 and taking on several more, how long can they last
- Could even be rated worse than the school you are considering replacing
- What is the next phase when the option has run its course
- Think we are going to have to look further down the road
- Another one of my big issues is a plan with stability like Member Ducan mentioned – not all areas and districts are the same
- Some closures affect it worse because the next school is not four miles away
- So just considering something that offers stability in each district if we are truly trying to keep the high schools in place that we currently have
- I hear what you guys are saying, it should be like you want to support growth, change and we have to replace some old school, but maybe just not with this current plan and need to look further down the road
- Am I hearing, are we going to look further down the road
- What is beyond the consensus of closing three schools
- What is the end goal
- That is what I am understanding from you, Vice Chairman Chandler, what is the next step in all this

Chairman Morris noted that we need to predict what this is going to cost us.

Vice Chairman Chandler commented:

- The Board of Commissioners needs to know what the need is
- We don't need to build swimming pools and stuff like that, I am talking about your immediate need
- One of the big things to me is the immediate need when you have got schools in a state, if we have more that are worse than King Elementary, I would hate to go through those schools
- To me that is an immediate need, then you phase into what is needed next – other new schools, renovations, etc.
- We just need to know what you need and want so we can then find out if we can accomplish this
- We can't write a check in one day or one year for everything, but we can get funding
- I know this is a terrible thing to say or a terrible thing to think but yes sometime in life costs go up, they do, we have got to fund things, we are required to fund things
- I think as long as we show the public, no one likes paying more taxes, I get that but we all like services, too
- I think along with public safety, I think education is right there – we have got to have quality education
- I don't want you to feel like that you have to not ask for something that you consider is a need that it is going to be just arbitrarily just disbanded because it is not

BOE Member Knight continued:

- Mr. Mendenhall pointed out a lot of our current debt, this may be a question for you ladies, if you close a facility that you have current debt outstanding, are you writing a check immediately to pay off the debt
- How does that work

Chairman Morris responded:

- That would be left up to the lender

Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown responded:

- We have reached out to the bank that we have the loan through to ask that question
- Their response was it is for an educational use, know it has been mentioned for a district office or another school, or whatever, the loan structure will be fine
- If it changes to any other form or use other than an educational use, the County will have to go back to the bank and basically get them to approve that change of use
- At that time, the bank will decide if we can keep our current loan structure or if the payoff will have to be paid in one lump sum – depends on the usage

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Had asked that question earlier and had Amber and Lisa check into that because some of the schools on the list that we owe on
- I am not singling one school out, but I will just say Lawsonville has been mentioned
- Confirmed with Finance Director Lankford, that the County currently owes \$965,880 on Lawsonville Elementary School
- We have to go to our financial banker, if it is used for educational purposes, we are okay, but if it is used for anything else, we would have to make a one-time payment of \$965,880

BOE Member Knight continued:

- I have also been, I would say the odd man out by being the only woman on the Board, but I also agree with what Mr. Duncan had mentioned as far as yes Masonboro is not perfect, and I have heard everybody's varied opinions on that tonight
- When you work doing that every day, I am not opposed to tell them what we can tolerate and what we can't and that they need to reformulate a few things but would need to see the data attached to that
- The public piece, yes, it definitely lacked as far as public buy-in; telling the public this has to happen, but not telling the benefits that we would see from it in the different areas
- I have really struggled with that
- The one public hearing was very disheartening
- I encourage the school board to work on a longer-range plan and fine tune some of the details for sure and go from there
- I do not know if Mr. Bryant had anything, he is the only one that has not gotten to speak yet

BOE Vice Chairperson Bryant commented:

- Have thought about it and thought about it

- We have done a lot of talking back and forth – several of us have
- One thing that I can't live with is making the north district any bigger, it is already 52% of the County and has less than 1,000 kids
- I can't go to the Forsyth County line so that I can get 500 kids at North Stokes
- I am sorry, I can't, I am not going to, I will never vote for that
- That is what I see when you start drawing maps and stuff and dividing up the schools to get them equal
- On the eastern side of the county, you have got to go all the way to Forsyth County
- My daughter went to North Stokes and to Piney Grove, we live closer to Southeastern and South Stokes
- From where I live, it is 10 miles closer to South Stokes than it is to North Stokes, but she went to North Stokes, got a great education, great school- I am sort of partial to it
- But the thing is that I can't move it to where other kids are driving 10 miles to South Stokes, but drive 25 to North Stokes
- I just can't do that
- We have got to figure out the redistricting
- This County has been redistricted enough when you got less than 1,000 kids in 52% of your county
- That is a major problem with me
- Masonboro drew the lines going down Volunteer Road right by Chestnut Grove Middle School
- You live across the road from Chestnut Grove Middle, can throw a rock in that yard, you were supposed to go to North Stokes and Piney Grove
- That is too far
- I don't know the answers but redistricting in that situation is definitely not it
- We might could tweak it a little bit but not much

Chairman Morris added that was what he was saying – meet with Masonboro and tweak it.

BOE Vice Chairperson Bryant continued:

- Went through Lawsonville the other day heading to Pilot Mountain by Piney Grove Middle up Lynchburg Road
- I hit the zero on the mileage counter at the Lawsonville Post Office, when I got to Venable Road which is the line for Pinnacle and Nancy Reynolds, it was 15 miles
- I drove all the way across half of Lawsonville and all of Nancy Reynolds in 15 miles
- When I am sitting there looking at what we have got to do, we have got to close some schools, we don't have a choice
- It is not that we want to do one study or the other study, but when Masonboro comes out here and they look at that school that will hold 800 kids - yes, the core capacity is 800 kids
- Problem is that there are only enough classrooms for 500 kids – they based their whole study off the core capacity of the schools instead of classroom capacity
- That study is worthless, I am sorry
- The numbers are so skewed there is no way it could be viable

Chairman Morris commented:

- Dwayne, it is the first iteration

BOE Vice Chairperson Bryant continued:

- But how many more times, like Chairperson Robertson stated, they walked through every school, they met with everyone of us, they even asked me what can you live with and what can you not live with
- Each one of us met with them, I think they met with some of the commissioners, I don't know if they met with everybody or what – didn't they meet with you guys

The Board of County Commissioners all confirmed that they did not meet with the Masonboro Group.

BOE Vice Chairperson Bryant continued:

- Sorry, I was told that they were meeting with some of you, but they did not

Commissioner Cox commented:

- If you think consolidation or closing a school is bad – redistricting and redrawing the lines are just as bad
- It is just as bad or worse than the other because we had to move the line between South Stokes High School and West Stokes High School – that was just as bad

BOE Member Rogers commented:

- The 3 schools that we are looking at consolidating are all on the Masonboro Plan

Commissioner Cox asked BOE Member Rogers to repeat that.

BOE Member Rogers continued:

- The three schools that are potentially to be closed are closed within phase one or phase two of the Masonboro Plan

Commissioner Mendenhall requested BOE Member Rogers to please list those three schools.

BOE Member Rogers responded:

- Pinnacle, Pine Hall, and King Elementary are all in phase one
- Phase two is Walnut Cove, Germanton, and London Elementary
- Lawsonville is right in there also because it comes with the new develop of plan for closing Lawsonville and Sandy Ridge Elementary for the new East Stokes Elementary School
- Then it turns Lawsonville into an alternative school
- The first iteration has two alternative schools instead of the one that we have now
- If you follow ORED, if you follow Masonboro, both of them close the same schools
- Then it comes down to funding

- Everybody that has contacted me is upset because the school in their district is going to be closed
- I have not had the first call from anybody saying oh please close my school, I am mad
- Now it becomes a funding issue in current expense
- If we are going to be reduced in funding because of your budget levels, then we simply have to close schools
- We have to decide what we are going to do to give these kids closure and time to mourn the closing of the school
- With the last current expense budget, we requested \$17 million, and some change based on what we saw our expenses go up from the previous year to this year
- We received \$15 million and that is going to about empty our fund balance, so we are not going to have a fund balance
- If the same trend continues, gas has not gone down that much, so if we are at \$18 million, is that still a fundable model on your early budget projections
- If we are going to consolidate to save money and produce a better education product, but we are going to wait and go with a second or third iteration of the Masonboro, if we chose to go that way, that is going to take time and we are going to have to keep these schools open – we can't do it without funding

Chairman Morris responded:

- Do that, keep them open until you figure it out, that is fine

Vice Chairman Chandler also responded:

- Keep the schools open until we can get a plan to move forward, submit a budget to us to keep the schools open

BOE Vice Chairperson Bryant commented:

- So you are going to fund the \$2 million that we asked for this year and again next year and the year after

Chairman Morris responded that is all based on how you justify it.

Vice Chairman Chandler responded:

- It is like I asked Dr. Rice when we had the meeting with the budget thing, and I appreciate him being honest
- We are looking at line items from the local funds that we are going to approve
- All five of us on this Board can sit here and ask about this line item, this line item, this line item, etc. and give the money to the school system
- Then as soon as it hits their bank account at the school system, he can move the money as he see fit
- We don't see any amendments that are coming over from our finance director because it is not a department of the county
- To me, it is kind of ridiculous to go line item by line item for the local part of the funding given to them from the County



- We have to trust him to do his job and the school board to over see what he is spending the money on
- I am for you telling us an amount of the local fund and if it is agreeable with the five of us, I will give you the full amount
- You can do with it what you want because you are going to do it anyway because you can
- I have to trust that you are doing the right thing with it
- If you are going to do a pet project and leave one of the schools not being funded and don't want to pay for the utilities or whatever that is on you – not on me

Chairman Morris added that he would give that money based on a plan, not without a plan

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Morris confirmed with both Boards there were no further comments.

With no further business to come before the Boards, BOE Chairperson Robertson entertained a motion to adjourn the Joint Meeting.

BOE Member Rogers moved to adjourn the Joint Meeting. BOE Vice Chairperson Bryant seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

With no further business to come before the Boards, Chairman Morris entertained a motion to adjourn the Joint Meeting.

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to adjourn the Joint Meeting. Vice Chairman Chandler seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

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**Amber Brown**

**Clerk to the Board**

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**Rick Morris**

**Chairman**

**STATE OF NORTH ) OFFICE OF THE**  
**CAROLINA ) COMMISSIONERS**  
**) STOKES COUNTY**  
**COUNTY OF STOKES ) GOVERNMENT**  
**DANBURY, NORTH**  
**CAROLINA**  
**MONDAY JANUARY 22, 2024**

## **Regular Meeting of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners**

The Stokes County Board of County Commissioners, State of North Carolina, met for a Regular Meeting on Monday, January 22, 2024 at 2:00 pm in the Commissioners' Chambers located in the Administrative Building in Danbury, North Carolina.

The following members were present for the meeting: Chairman Brad Chandler, Vice Chairman Keith Wood, Commissioner Sonya Cox, Commissioner Ronnie Mendenhall, and Commissioner Rick Morris.

County Administration present: Interim County Manager/Clerk to the Board Amber Brown, Finance Director Lisa Lankford, and Attorney Jennifer Michaud (representative for County Attorney Tyrone Browder)

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Chandler called the meeting to order.

### **INVOCATION**

Chairman Chandler invited those in attendance to join the Board in the invocation, if so desired.

Commissioner Mendenhall delivered the invocation.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Chandler invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Chandler entertained a motion to approve or amend the agenda.

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to approve the agenda as presented. Vice Chairman Wood seconded the motion.

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for discussion/questions/comments.

With no discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

### **Public Comments**

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for public comments.

Chairman Chandler stated:

- Public comments are limited to 4 minutes
- Once the 4-minute time has lapsed, each speaker will be given time to finish their sentence
- Would request anyone who wishes to give up their time to someone else, please notify the Board who you wish to give your minutes to
- I didn't think I would ever have to say this, but I want to remind some people that we have rules and decorum and when your time is up and you are asked to stop, please stop
- I also want to ask people to please turn off your cell phone, have a problem with people coming from some part of the county that leaves their cell phone on wanting to disrupt the meeting – I will not tolerate that any more

The following spoke during public comments:

**Terry Fowler**

108 Glen Brooke Lane

King, NC

Re: **Proposed Occupancy Tax**

Ms. Fowler presented the following comments:

- I am here today to speak to you about the proposed occupancy tax and how the dollars will be distributed among the county and the municipalities
- I am speaking on behalf of our city council as well
- We are aware that it is proposed to collect 6% occupancy tax as that is the maximum amount that can be collected
- We would like to suggest that you take 3% for administration which would include printing, advertising, and other administrative matters and the other 3% be divided among the three municipalities within the county by a formula according to what is sent in by those collecting the tax from all the municipalities
- As our communities continue to grow and especially King, we know that the proposed amount of collection would increase over time
- We do understand that King and all the municipalities will have a seat at the table when the Tourism Development Authority is formed
- Thank you for your time
- We would appreciate you considering our request

**Rick McCraw**

509 Whispering Creek Road

King, NC

Re: **Proposed Occupancy Tax**

Mr. McCraw presented the following comments:

- I am here also today to speak about the occupancy tax and how the revenue dollars will be distributed among Stokes County and the municipalities
- After researching the Magellan Strategic Group, I was very impressed with their program
- I was looking at their website which talks about focusing on shopping and cities as well as natural resources
- Will the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) be promoting such things as the Stokes Stomp, Walnut Cove Car Cruise-In, KingFest, King Meet Me on Main, Palmetto Theater, Arts Center, Fourth of July Fireworks, etc.
- I know it is talked about being for tourism, but I think those are just as important
- I understand that King and the municipalities will have a representative on the TDA Board
- Would like to be provided the other members that will be on the TDA

- I understand that it is proposed to collect 6% occupancy tax
- I would also like to see 3% authorized for administration and then the other 3% divided among the 3 municipalities within the county
- After looking at their website, I see that some of the counties get 3% and then the cities and towns get 3%
- I know that Pilot Mountain in Surry County and other counties do that, would like to see that happen here
- I understand the proposal is for 6% and I would like to see the 3% divided among the municipalities
- Thank you again for your time and understanding
- We really appreciate your consideration on these requests

**Mary Burton**

235 Winfield Drive

King, NC

Re: **Animal Welfare Law**

Ms. Burton gave her 4-minute time to Kathleen Edwards.

**Kathleen Edwards**

1726 Rogers Road

Mount Airy, NC (Stokes County)

Re: **Animal Welfare**

Ms. Edwards presented the following comments:

- Before I present my comments, I would like to apologize to Amber for walking out of the meeting last time; I was frustrated, and she has a difficult job
- I am here today to discuss the significance of local animal welfare ordinances
- Local ordinances go beyond the minimum requirements set by state cruelty laws
- These ordinances reflect the values of the local community and its taxpayers
- Local ordinances play a crucial role in reducing suffering by holding dog owners accountable for neglect and abuse
- In Stokes County, we have established higher standards for animal welfare compared to the laws passed by the General Assembly
- Local ordinances bridge the gap between inadequate state laws and the priorities of local communities
- Those involved in animal welfare enforcement often find that state cruelty laws are only applied when a dog has already succumbed to abuse or is on the brink of death due to neglect
- This is a very low standard
- As a compassionate community, the taxpayers of Stokes County have established a higher standard, a stronger level of protection for the innocent and voiceless dogs in our communities
- Commissioner Cox once asked why state law does not prohibit tethering
- The answer is that state lawmakers create laws for the entire population of North Carolina - 10.5 million people including industries and corporations
- In contrast, local laws reflect the compassion, intelligence, and values of local residents
- Local ordinances directly reflect the moral priorities within a city, town, or county
- The spouse of an Animal Control Advisory Board member recently claimed that our animal control ordinance is being rewritten to make it more affordable for pet owners; however, affordability should never be a consideration when drafting animal welfare law
- Animal welfare law is wholly unrelated to cost and focuses solely on preventing suffering, minimizing cruelty, and ensuring public safety
- Proper animal care can be quite expensive because it involves various responsibilities that

require significant financial resources

- Animal welfare ordinances protect the dogs who live at the fringes of the available resources in our county
- These ordinances safeguard the dogs whose owners fail to provide proper care
- If anyone of you have experienced spending multiple consecutive days and nights in subfreezing wind like the chained and penned dogs in our county did this past week, please raise your hand
- Domestic animals need protection from neglect when temperatures drop below freezing
- Recently our windchills have been in the single digits
- Every year, dogs freeze to death outside due to the negligence of irresponsible individuals
- It is essential that you maintain the existing laws we have to ensure that we minimize suffering to the greatest extent possible
- When it comes to animal welfare ordinances, progress should be our goal – not regression
- Stokes County's Chief Animal Officer Tommy Reeves wants to take us back to a time of brutality, barbarism, and widespread cruelty that existed here five decades ago
- The citizens of this County will not tolerate it
- How we allow people to treat animals is a reflection of our character
- In 2020, Walnut Cove Veterinarian Deb Cowan stated in the Stokes News that it is time that we come out of the dark ages with regard to animal welfare
- The ordinances that have been enacted to protect dogs from neglect ensure a more humane existence for those forced to live their entire lives outdoors alone and without relief
- It is our duty to preserve and safeguard local ordinances to protect the vulnerable residents who cannot defend themselves from neglect and abuse
- We do not want a lawless county
- We do not want enforcement officers who casually and repeatedly turn a blind eye to suffering
- Through the persistence and dedication of advocates who have witnessed the cruelty inflicted upon animals, we have finally achieved better protection for neglected animals
- The citizens of Stokes County urge the five of you to uphold the important laws that have been established through decades of concerted effort
- How many of you remember Operation Dark Hollow – over 90 animals were rescued from a 12-acre property here in Danbury – our county seat – after a life of pure torture
- If such an extreme level of abuse can occur, even with existing laws, one can only imagine the horrors that will come to light if these laws are repealed by this commission
- Lack of regulation results in unsanitary living conditions, cruel confinement, substandard shelter, starvation, and other horrifying instances of neglect
- The absence of regulation directly leads to suffering and in some cases slow and painful deaths
- If you look at Stokes County through the lens of history, particularly with regard to animal welfare, we have made significant progress; however, there is still more work to do
- The last thing that we want to see is a return to inadequate standards of care for domestic, companion animals
- It is your responsibility as commissioners to uphold and protect the ordinances that have been duly enacted to prevent unnecessary suffering under your jurisdiction
- Thank you all for your kind attention

With no further speakers, Chairman Chandler closed the public comments.

### **COMMENTS - Managers/Commissioners**

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for comments from the manager/commissioners.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Will be short today
- I know I have been rather long winded at a couple of meetings, so I will be short today
- Thank you all for being here today
- It is always a pleasure to see citizens come out and take an interest in our government
- We are here to serve you, try to understand your comments as you come forward
- I just want to thank each and every one of you again for coming out today
- To anybody that is watching on live stream, thank you for tuning in
- Hope everyone has a safe journey home
- Thank you, Mr. Chairman

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Would like to welcome everybody that is participating in our meeting today, we appreciate that
- I would like to thank the elected officials and the folks from King who spoke about the occupancy tax
- We will definitely take that into consideration
- I need to do some more research and probably talk to Eddy and Tory before we lock it all in
- I kind of thought the TDA was going to decide about the distribution
- We will be very transparent about who is on the TDA and make sure you guys are all participants in that process
- I think you were talking about 3% going to the municipalities
- One question that I would have would be if you limit it to 3% to the municipalities
- I am assuming you are saying 1% to each municipality, that might not be right, there may need to be more depending on what the project is or what we are doing
- I don't want to be so rigid that we have unintended consequences where the money doesn't end up where it is needed
- I think we are very open to your request making sure that gets handled properly
- The only other thing that I have today is that I was at a political meeting this past weekend where several candidates were speaking, the subject of the \$90 million came up for the school facility upgrades/renovations that was included in Perry Peterson's Report
- A couple of the candidates said that the \$90 million did not include plumbing, electrical, and HVAC upgrades which did not exactly make sense to me - \$90 million is a lot, I could not figure what else you would spend it on if that wasn't part of the estimated quote
- I asked Amber to double check with Stuart and Perry
- The upgrades for plumbing, electrical, and HVAC are included in the \$90 million figure - just wanted to get the record correct
- That is all I have

Vice Chairman Wood commented:

- Thank everybody for coming
- I have had so many people saying that they watch every week on YouTube
- I wish they would get a life or volunteer to do something more important
- Thanks for coming
- Thanks for the City of King being represented
- The Aged 60 Plus Food Bank and More had its distribution last Thursday, it was breezy, but we delivered over 4 tons of food to 101 families
- I even saw some Virginia tags this time
- That program is going really good – want to thank Jill and Ben for what they are doing
- I will close today with my little quote that I always come up with – “Alone we could do so little, together we can do so much” Helen Keller
- That is all I have got

Commissioner Cox commented:

- Would like to thank everyone for being here today, for the public input during the public comments
- I would also like to thank and recognize Renee Bridges who is here today, I think we talked about this at one of our meetings where she just happened to be on the scene when a motorcyclist was hit over in King a couple of weeks ago
- The motorcyclist is out of the hospital and is doing good
- She was able to administer aid right on the scene and just happened to be at the right place at the right time
- A very good outcome and thank her for that and all of our EMS folks and First Responders for sure
- Thanks to the City of King folks and their comments, I think like Rick was saying, when this committee gets formed, I think a lot of those questions can be answered
- I know it is on the agenda today for discussion, but I think we need to look at what some of the other counties are doing and how they divvy up those funds
- I agree with what Mayor Rick was saying about promoting all of those types of events and the money from this fund should be available to do that and not just tourism per say – I agree with that
- As far as the animal control ordinances and things, I don't think there is anybody on this Board that is willing to go backwards from where we are today for sure
- Hopefully, can make some just common-sense changes going forward
- I think when we get this new building, we have new employees and things, we just need to move in a positive direction
- I don't think anyone wants to see us go backwards from here for sure
- That is all I have

Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown commented:

- Welcome to everybody here today
- Thank the City of King for their comments, we can definitely look at that, we have had some discussions in the past, it is not too late, we can look at that as we move forward
- Thank you Kathleen for your words and your apology, I appreciate that
- That is all I have

Chairman Chandler commented:

- Welcome everybody
- I appreciate everybody taking an interest in your local government
- Just a couple of things today
- I went to a class Thursday in Raleigh – a leadership class for chairs and vice chairs put on by the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC)
- It also provided briefs on new legislative laws that have been passed that affect like our code of ethics or could be perception of being involved in situations where it looks like you are not being totally objective in terms of the way you vote
- I did learn a lot
- I will be consulting with our county attorney, since Jennifer is here today, I will start with her
- Very good class
- I have lived up here full time since 2015, we take things for granted, the county we live in a lot of people take for granted, you wake up every morning, drink a cup of coffee, and see the beautiful mountain views, people take it for granted
- Since I moved here that is something that I don't take for granted
- Something that I did take for granted, I realized that at 3:15 pm at the leadership training when we were taking a break and getting ready to step outside
- A gentleman walked in to make an announcement, he stated that there had been numerous

- vehicles broken into in the parking lot – broad daylight
- Wanted everyone to go out and check their vehicle for broken glass, if so, just raise your hand so a Raleigh officer can come by to take a report
- Through the grace of God, due to parking situations, I did not drive my F350 truck that has an extended bed, I took my wife's Subaru
- As I started looking around, I noticed there was a common denominator to all the vehicles that were broken into – they were all trucks
- When I was talking to the Raleigh officer, I asked him why he thought they were just breaking into trucks – his response was that they were looking for guns
- Couple of things - number one, I was armed, had my credentials but left it in the Subaru, so they missed out on that
- If I had taken my truck, I would have gotten broke into, and I probably been missing a weapon and missing my police credentials
- I know that we have crime in Stokes County, I can remember the days in Fayetteville going to people and saying just what the officers had to say to those whose vehicle was broken into
- It is heartbreaking when people are coming to stay in a hotel and then they are victimized
- I am thankful for the lifestyle that we do have here in Stokes County
- In the terms along the lines of public safety, as you recall, I had a good friend that was killed in the line of duty a few weeks ago
- I know, just like Commissioner Cox who has a son in law enforcement, I also have family and good friends in law enforcement
- I don't want us to forget those people that go out in front for us whether it be the Police, the Sheriff's Department, our Firefighters, our EMS, our E911 Telecommunicators, we can't forget what they do and also how they are treated for the most part
- In today's times, even our politicians don't stand with them
- I just want to share something because when someone doesn't come home as a police officer, it changes everyone's lives
- Sergeant Nix (Dale) left a wife, Kelly, and a 16-year-old son, Will – it is just heartbreaking
- I spent most of my day Saturday afternoon into the evening with his family who came up to our house, we talked, it will never be the same again – never
- I just want to make sure that Stokes County understands we need to appreciate them, when you see that Sheriff car or the Police car going by, you have got somebody that is willing to give their life up for us
- It is not just their life; it affects their families' lives forever – forever
- Thank you for listening to me today

### **Conflicts Of Interest**

Chairman Chandler asked if any Board member had a conflict of interest with any of the items presented on the agenda for the meeting 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.

Minutes

Budget Amendments

Chairman Chandler entertained a motion to approve the consent agenda which included minutes and



budget amendments.

Commissioner Morris wanted to make a comment before the motion.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- When we were discussing the performance evaluations and compression pay recently, HR Director Clark was talking about the number of employees that we have
- When I was reviewing the minutes, I don't think the minutes need correcting, I think they state what she actually said, I had asked a follow up question regarding the numbers quoted during her presentation, but was still confused a little bit, so I went and talked to her after the meeting
- In the minutes, HR Director Clarks states that she was looking today at the numbers of our active employees compared to 2016, in 2016 we had 280 active employees and now we have 450 that we are fighting to keep here
- I asked her if that total included part time employees, she stated including part time employees the number would be 538
- That did not make sense to me so that is why I wanted some clarification
- When I left as county manager, about that time frame, we had, I think between 280 to 300 full time employees
- She said she thought that number of full-time employees now is around 340 full time employees and the larger number she gave included permanent part time and part time employees
- I just wanted to clarify that we have not added that many full-time employees
- Amber, could you give us a breakout during your comments of each category of employees we have and how many currently
- Might want to consider putting the total number of employees on the organization chart and keep it updated

Commissioner Cox moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Commissioner Mendenhall seconded the motion.

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for any further discussion/questions/comments.

With no discussion and the motion passed unanimously.

## **INFORMATION 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.

### **Register of Deeds Quarterly Report**

Chairman Chandler turned the meeting over to Register of Deeds Brandon Hooker for the Register of Deeds Quarterly Report. (detailed information available on the January 22<sup>nd</sup> agenda or from Register of Deeds Brandon Hooker)

Register of Deeds Brandon Hooker presented the following information:

- Thank you for the opportunity to be here today
- Monies taken in for the Fiscal Year 2023-24 Second Quarter: (October 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023)
  - Total Recording Fees: \$ 56,573.50
  - Total Excise Tax: \$ 85,691.00

- Total Revenue: \$142,264.50
- Reporting period October 1, 2023 – December 31, 2023:
  - Deeds - 453
  - Deeds of Trust - 303
  - Miscellaneous Documents - 303
  - Plats - 59
  - Birth Certificates - 1
  - Death Certificates - 99
  - Marriage Licenses - 63
  - Notary Oaths - 27
  - Notarized Signatures - 7
  - Certified Copies - 682
  - Un-Certified Copies - 619
- The number of transactions in the Second Quarter of 2023-2024 Fiscal Year was a 21.37% increase from the Second Quarter of the 2022-2023
- The revenue collected in the Second Quarter of 2023-2024 Fiscal Year was a 9.49% decrease from the Second Quarter of the 2022-2023
- Monies collected by the state from the Register of Deeds' Office:
  - Conveyance Tax = \$42,845.50
  - Domestic Violence Center = \$1,890.00
  - Children's Trust Fund = \$315.00
  - State Treasurer = \$7,743.80
  - Total: \$52,794.30
- Net Revenue:
  - Gross Revenue = \$142,264.50
  - Less monies collected by the state = \$52,794.30
  - Total Net Revenue = \$89,470.20
- Our first six months of this fiscal year has been pretty comparable to the same time last year
- Two years ago, was peak for our local market, this last couple of years have been pretty steady
- I am sure you noticed that the number of transactions increased over 21% over the last year and that was when our website was down in October 2023, and we had a lot of title searchers in the office making copies that they would normally be making at home/offices
- That attributed to a lot of the increase
- When you take out just the copy increase, it was only a 2% increase in transactions which is still an increase
- Revenues decreased in that quarter due to the decrease in sales compared to the previous year
- October and November this past year was fairly steady, but December was our slowest December in a number of years
- We are already ahead this month of where we were in December at this time – January has picked up a little bit
- Our sales and transactions are higher than they were before COVID
- Reiterated a couple of years ago was when we peaked with the last years being steady at around \$400-\$425,000.00 in revenue which is still a 34 to 40 percent increase over the first three years that I was here – it all depends on the market
- If the Feds lower the rates like we are speculating this upcoming year, we could see an uptick in sales
- Also wanted to mention that because our access site was down in October, it affected our property notification service – during the last quarterly report that I gave, Commissioner Morris questioned when the site might be back up and running
- It was back up and running a couple of weeks after my report to the Board

- Due to the site being down, anyone who created an account before July 1, 2023, you are fine, if you created an account after July 1, 2023, you would need to create a new account
- Our vendor, Logan Systems, has already sent out emails out to everyone regarding this
- Looking over calendar year 2023, vital records which includes birth, death, and marriage records, we recorded the following:
  - 9 birth certificates - a lot for a county that does not have a hospital that delivers babies
  - 410 death certificates
  - 256 marriage licenses
  - These records represent about \$9,000 of our net revenue for the calendar year of 2023
  - That number is the largest for marriage licenses since I became Register of Deeds
  - We have had a lot of wedding venues pop up – a growing industry
  - I think we have the beautiful scenery here in Stokes County for that kind of business
- Began electronic recording of maps in July 2023, which means that we can now accept every real estate document electronically – have had 3 local surveyors to sign up to take advantage of that new method of recording
- We finalized an 18-month Back Indexing Project with Courthouse Computer Systems that will improve access to records beyond our digitizing years - will be indexing records from 1993 backwards to 1979 by first and last names (currently you have to find first the last name, then the first name and then find the book and page – this will make it a lot easier)
- This new indexing should be imported into our system next month
- We have digitized all our highway projects maps back to the late 60s this year, will be available online soon
- We preserved and digitized marriage licenses from 1880 to 1883 and currently have a box with licenses from 1884 to 1886 at the preservation lab in Greensboro which leaves approximately 30 years of marriage licenses left to do – that will be almost 200 years' worth of licenses
- In August 2023, I hosted a genealogy workshop which had a lot of good attendance; planning to make it an annual workshop – hope to have another workshop this summer
- Personnel changes:
  - Deputy Judy Puckett retired – replaced Cynthia Collins
  - Assistant Deputy Donna Rogers transferred to Human Resources – replaced by Kim Overstreet
- Goals for 2024:
  - Still working on a Property Fraud Seminar – will explain the dangers associated with property fraud and hopefully provide tips on how to avoid falling victim to that crime – would like to offer to Ruritan and Rotary Clubs, libraries, senior centers, etc.
  - Going to kick off the seminars with my first presentation next month at the King Senior Center on February 19<sup>th</sup>
  - Want to expand our Veterans Program – it has been well received by our Veterans
  - Want to partner with the local wedding venues to establish a link to our website from their website regarding the requirements for a marriage license – couples will be able to find out exactly what they need before coming into the office
  - Complete a disaster and recovery plan for our office and records with a lot already being done by our Association – this has been a hot button issue this past year statewide with a lot of counties falling victim to cyber attacks
  - Have been working towards that to also include power outages, floods, and so forth – a big push to get us all prepared for those kind of events
  - Want to create a new filing system for the old maps that are currently not digitized and are still glued or stapled into our old deed books – still have attorneys and title searchers needing to pull some of those old maps – will be a big project that will probably carry over into next year, but want to get started this year
- That is all I have, be happy to answer any questions

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for discussion/questions/comments.

There were no questions or comments, other than the Board members all expressing a good, detailed, and comprehensive report.

Chairman Chandler expressed the Board's appreciation for the quarterly report.

### **Duke Energy Environmental Impact Programs Grant Award**

Chairman Chandler turned the floor over to Tourism/Economic Development Analyst Tory Mabe for the Duke Energy Environmental Impact Programs Grant Award. (Analyst Mabe presented a power point presentation which is available from the Clerk to the Board Amber Brown or Analyst Tory Mabe - Economic Development)

Tourism/Economic Analyst Tory Mabe presented the following information:

- On December 19, 2023, Stokes County Economic Development & Tourism received notification that Duke Energy had awarded the department and Stokes County a grant totaling \$10,000.00 to support efforts to implement and begin a Dan River Mile Marker Signage Project for the banks of the Dan River
- Stokes County Economic Development & Tourism submitted a grant in nearly November 2023 for Duke Energy's year-end grants and recently received the grant funds from Duke Energy at a check presentation by Director Jimmy Flythe, Central Regional Government and Community Relations (check presentation was held at the new Pitzer Road River Access that was funded and developed by Duke Energy)
- The grant is part of Duke Energy's Environmental Collaborations Program
  - Duke Energy donated \$500,000 to support environmental impact programs in North Carolina communities
    - Diverse projects support land conservation, biodiversity of plant and animal species, environmental resiliency, and community engagement
- This project will bring greater awareness to all sections of the 52 miles of river flowing throughout Stokes County
- The idea behind this project began as a collaboration between Stokes Economic Development, Emergency Medical Services, Fire Marshal's Office, Tax Department, and GIS/Mapping in early 2021 as an effort to increase safety, education, and location awareness for those floating the Dan River
- The project focuses around color coded sections of the river and mile numbers which coordinate with the mileage points that fall in Stokes County from the completely mark head to tail waters of the river
  - GIS Specialist Greg Hunsucker has actually numbered the miles of the whole entire river basin from the headwaters to the tailwaters – marking the river from the highest number to the lowest number at the tailwaters, similar to the marking of an interstate highway
  - Other counties could join the project by continuation of the numbers where their county line starts such as Rockingham County
  - Markers are color coded with mile numbers which would allow any nationality to be able to report to E911 what color or number they have recently passed to indicate their location on the river
  - Signs will have GPS coordinates to help locate someone's location
  - In heavily traveled areas, we would hopefully do quarter mile marker signs
- Each engineered sign along the banks will have signed agreements from property owners, that will feature a simple color and number to help anyone who may be lost or need emergency

- assistance to have a point of reference when calling 911
- With this \$10,000 grant, we hope to get started with the project within the highest traveled area of the river which would be between Flinchum Road, and the new Pitzer Road Access which Duke Energy helped to fund as well
- Reviewed a copy of the map prepared by GIS Specialist Hunsucker which showed the different color code sections of the river
- The whole idea of the project is to bring a better awareness of the river – have people that want to travel the river and enjoy its scenery (they can look at the map to determine where they want to put in and get out of the river)
- Also included in the grant application budget were kiosks at each river access point
  - We are working with the Dan River Basin Association (DRBA) on the Dan River State Trail which includes the Dan River
  - With the Dan River being included in the Dan River State Trail, it helps with grant funding and other initiatives
  - DRBA is going to be working on some projects in Stokes County within the next couple of years
    - Anna Wheeler with DRBA was really receptive to this idea when we brought her to Stokes County and outlined the project
  - Have also presented this project to the County's Safety Committee
- We are getting the ball rolling on this project
  - Getting some engineered plans for the signage
  - Will be working on getting property owners agreement signed to allow placement of the signage along the river
  - Folks at Duke Energy are interested in volunteering hours to help place signs along the river
  - Also have volunteers from river groups with the Dan River Basin Association who are also willing to help
  - The idea is to hopefully recruit enough volunteers to do different sections at different times
- Pleased today to present this grant funding for the Dan River Mile Marker Signage Project and will be happy to answer any questions.

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for discussion/questions/comments.

Vice Chairman Wood commented:

- Questioned how the markers would be secured so that they don't float down the river
- Last thing you would want to see is those markers floating down the river

Analyst Mabe responded:

- The colors presented on the power point are not necessarily set in stone
- We want to collaborate with the landowners to make sure the colors are engineered to fit into the background and not be obtrusive

Vice Chairman Wood continued:

- The river is pretty powerful, and you will probably see that this weekend if we get five or more inches of rain again
- My question is how they are going to stay in place – be secure
- Don't want to be neglective about the project, just curious

Analyst Mabe responded:

- Will be working with engineers; some could be attached to trees in some locations
- There are other mile marker projects that have been done in North Carolina and other states

Vice Chairman Wood continued:

- The markers are definitely needed if they are not located far from the river - they need to be seen easily from the river

Commissioner Cox commented:

- Think it is a good idea for safety reasons
- I think it was during COVID that we had kids, that were non-English speaking, put on the river thinking it just went in a circle and came back to the point where they were put in
- I am sure those kids probably did not have a cell phone
- If I was tubing the river, it would make me feel a little bit better if I knew that I could help to pinpoint where I was on the river if I had an emergency and needed to call 911
- Think the project can be very helpful and may even save someone's life
- As Vice Chairman Wood noted, don't know how you would affix them so that the current doesn't take the sign down the river at some point
- Agree with Vice Chairman Wood that we do need them close enough to the river to be visible, but not to where they would float down the river during heavy rains
- I am sure there is an expert that knows how that can be accomplished

Analyst Mabe responded:

- We will consider all the suggestions
- We have also talked about making sure there will be a volunteer group that can go down periodically to check the markers

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Definitely in favor of the project
- The markers are definitely needed not only for the people in the river but also for the First Responders
- They can use the help; this could help eliminate spending hours/days trying to find people

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Would like to thank Tory for all his involvement this project, know that you have had quite a bit of involvement with project and securing the grant funding
- I know when we first started talking about the access on Pitzer Road which I have visited the area several times since then
- There is a very nice access area on Pitzer Road – did a good job with that
- Want to thank a couple of other people:
  - Jimmy Flythe who stays so involved; he helps Stokes County out in many ways
    - Jimmy is the central regional representative for Duke Energy for our area
    - I see Jimmy at several meetings
    - Just want to thank Jimmy on behalf of myself as a county commissioner, I am sure all the other commissioners do also
- As far as safety, I certainly think this project is great
- I come to Danbury a lot in the summertime (on a Saturday or Sunday) and the number of people that uses the Dan River is unbelievable along with those visiting Hanging Rock State Park
- When we got the access on Pitzer Road, I have seen it improve as we go along
- I want to say a thank you again to Jimmy and to all those at Duke Energy for the \$10,000 grant for this project
- Just want to say thank you again, Tory, for all your hard work

Vice Chairman Chandler commented:

- Appreciate the good work and want to highlight the team concept where it is not just Economic Development when you incorporate other members of the organization
- I think that needs to continue
- Can't stay enough about Duke Energy and Jimmy Flythe
- They contribute a lot to Stokes County with support and funding
- We don't want to forget their contributions to Stokes County
- Thank you, Tory, for a great job on the project

Chairman Chandler expressed the Board's appreciation for today's presentation.

## **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.

### **Tax Office Agenda**

Chairman Chandler turned the floor over to Tax Administrator Richard Brim to present the Tax Administration Report.

Tax Administrator Richard Brim presented the following items for discussion: (detailed information available on the January 22<sup>nd</sup> agenda or from Tax Administrator Brim)

- January 2024 Report
  - Tax Collections Status Report for FY 2023-2024
    - The report normally runs until the end of the month, this report runs through January 5<sup>th</sup> – January 6<sup>th</sup> is when the 2023 taxes become delinquent
    - As of January 5<sup>th</sup>, we have collected 94.26% of the budget amount – about \$400,000 ahead of where we were at last year
- Real and Personal Releases less than \$100.00
  - Three (3) accounts totaling \$221.88
- Real and Personal Refunds less than \$100.00
  - Three (3) account totaling \$31.15
- Real/Personal Refunds more than \$100.00
  - Three (3) accounts totaling \$403.12
- Discovery and Garnishment Report:
  - Discoveries: Report to the Board in accordance with NC G.S. 105-312(b)
    - Business/Personal Property Discover Report for Quarter: (10/1/23 -12/31/23)
      - 145 accounts
      - Total value = \$1,181,098.00
      - Taxes Due = \$15,185.46
    - Total Business and Personal Discoveries Billed for Fiscal Year (07/1/23 - 06/30/24)
      - 245 accounts
      - Total Value = \$2,726,605.00
      - Taxes Due = \$32,295.52
  - Garnishments: (detailed report can be submitted upon request by Board)
    - Garnishments for 10/1/23-12/31/23
      - 182 accounts
      - Original Levy Amount = \$41,368.88
      - Collected Amount = \$29,348.01
    - Garnishments for 07/01/23 – 06/30/24

- 347 accounts
- Original Levy Amount = \$118,868.23
- Collected Amount = \$80,731.54
- EMS Billings and Collections July 2023 – December 2023
  - Transports Billed = 2,481
  - Total Charges = \$1,862,723.00
  - Total Paid Current = \$1,137,544.85
  - Total Prior Paid = \$78,283.67
  - Medicare/Medicaid Non-billable = \$442,771.09
  - Other Non-billable = \$28,949.22
- DataMax Interstate Collections Report
  - Total collected: (October 2023 – December 2023)
    - Vehicle Taxes = \$170.30
    - Property Taxes = \$1,083.01
    - EMS = \$4,377.00
    - Grant Total = \$5,630.31
- 2% Early Payment Discount (Informational Only)
  - Stokes County currently offers an “Early Payment Discount of 2% on annual tax bills if paid prior to September 1<sup>st</sup>
  - If the Board desires to amend the discount percentage, approval must be done by May 1<sup>st</sup> per G.S.105.360
  - Provided chart that illustrates the 2023 Annual Tax Bills for Early Payment using different percentages for the Board’s consideration:

<b>Tax District</b>	<b>2% Discount</b>	<b>1.5% Discount</b>	<b>1% Discount</b>	<b>\$0.50 Discount</b>
<b>County</b>	\$ 159,189.11	\$ 119,391.83	\$ 79,594.56	\$ 39,797.28
<b>School Operating Expense</b>	\$ 143,008.51	\$ 107,256.38	\$ 71,504.26	\$ 35,752.13
<b>Education Debt/Building</b>				
<b>Fund</b>	\$ 19,496.06	\$ 14,622.04	\$ 9,748.03	\$ 4,874.02
<b>Service Fire District</b>	\$ 19,617.82	\$ 14,713.37	\$ 9,808.91	\$ 4,904.45
<b>King Fire District</b>	\$ 5,860.97	\$ 4,395.73	\$ 2,930.49	\$ 1,465.24
<b>Walnut Cove Fire District</b>	\$ 3,528.61	\$ 2,646.46	\$ 1,764.31	\$ 882.15
<b>Rural Hall Fire District</b>	\$ 1,031.91	\$ 773.93	\$ 515.96	\$ 257.98
<b>City of King</b>	\$ 45,304.76	\$ 33,978.57	\$ 22,652.38	\$ 11,326.19
<b>Town of Walnut Cove</b>	\$ 6,215.87	\$ 4,661.90	\$ 3,107.94	\$ 1,553.97
<b>Town of Danbury</b>	\$ 385.46	\$ 289.10	\$ 192.73	\$ 96.36
<b>Grant Total</b>	\$ 403,639.08	\$ 302,729.31	\$ 201,819.57	\$ 100,909.77

- It is the Board’s decision to amend the Early Payment Discount Percentage or leave as is
- Generally, we get about 53-54% of taxes in the first month of the discount period
- That 2% discount does get the cash flow rolling
- On Monday, February 19<sup>th</sup>, the Tax Office along with Register of Deeds and Economic Development will be at King Recreation at 11:00 am in the lower level (off of White Road) – I will be giving a presentation regarding the 2025 Re-appraisal (updates and information)
- Would invite the Board to attend if available
- Would request the Board place the Real/Personal Refunds more than \$100.00 on the February 12<sup>th</sup> consent agenda

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for discussion/questions/comments.



Commissioner Morris commented:

- Confirmed with Tax Administrator Brim that if the Board chose to change the 2% discount for early payment, it would have to be done by May 1<sup>st</sup>

Tax Administrator Brim responded:

- Would have to be approved by May 1<sup>st</sup> and sent to Raleigh for approval
- The statute states the percentage has to be a reasonable rate
- There are 37 North Carolina counties that offer the 2% discount for early payment
- The range for the discount across North Carolina is from .50% to 3%
- Mitchell County is the only county in North Carolina that offers a 3% early payment discount
- Most counties are 1-2%
- In talking with Alamance County, they offer .50% because when you offer early discount payment, escrow companies must take advantage of the discount which still makes the cash flow come in

Commissioner Morris continued:

- Maybe you and Amber need to discuss whether to stay at 2%
- I don't have a strong feeling one way or the other, but that is a lot of money - \$403,639.08 for a 2% discount
- Not sure if we could accomplish the same thing if we went to 1% or 1.5%

Tax Administrator Brim responded:

- You would definitely get the escrow companies
- Would be happy to talk with Amber and Lisa about that and come back to the Board

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Confirmed with Tax Administrator Brim that the date for the information meeting regarding the re-appraisal at the King Recreation Center (lower level) is Monday, February 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am
- Very good report
- Want to throw in my two cents worth regarding the 2% early payment discount, I am 100% for keeping it like it is right now – just one person on a five-person board
- You, Amber, and Lisa can certainly discuss the early payment discount
- I don't know the number of people that talks to me about using the 2% early payment discount
- Confirmed with Tax Administrator Brim that 53.75% took advantage of the 2% early discount payment this year
- I have a lot of people who come to me and state that they like the early payment discount, and they definitely use it
- It would be different if we only had 5% or 10% of people in the County that used it
- It is a very popular thing in my opinion, I am just one person
- I would like to see that kept as it currently is if we can – everyone else certainly has their comments
- That is all for me

Vice Chairman Wood commented:

- Good job and have no questions
- Just want to say that I am not going to touch the 2% early discount payment, there is just some things that you need to leave alone
- That is all for me

Commissioner Cox commented:

- I would agree with Vice Chairman Wood's comments regarding the 2% early discount
- Good report
- Appreciate the hard work you do all the time and all the effort that goes into generating those reports

Chairman Chandler echoed the comments regarding a great job.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- From judging the feedback from other commissioners' comments, maybe you all don't need to meet regarding the 2% early payment discount, it is totally the Board's discretion

Commissioner Mendenhall added:

- Did not mean to stir up the hornets' nest by being the first person to mention this, but I just have so many people that come to me and say that they make the extra effort to come and pay their taxes to get that 2% early payment discount
- Just throwing that out as my opinion that I would like to see the 2% early payment discount kept – as is
- Like I said, everyone else has their right to their own opinion

Tax Administrator Brim added:

- Just wanted the Board to know in case it came up in a budget meeting after the May 1<sup>st</sup> deadline to change – it would be too late to change

Commissioner Morris added:

- I get a bill from another state where I own property, there is no discount, they send you a bill in January and tell you to pay it by the end of January
- If you wait to pay the bill in February, the bill goes up 5 or 6%; if you wait to pay the bill in March, it goes up another 5 or 6% more
- There is a whole different spectrum in other states, but like our system a lot better

Chairman Chandler, with full consensus of the Board, directed Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown to place the Real/Personal Refund more than \$100 on the February 12<sup>th</sup> consent agenda.

### **Draft Resolution Authorizing the Establishment of an Occupancy Tax and Tourism Development Authority**

Chairman Chandler turned the floor over to Tourism/Economic Development Analyst Tory Mabe for the presentation regarding the draft Resolution Authorizing the Establishment of an Occupancy Tax and Tourism Development Authority (TDA).

Tourism/Economic Development Analyst Tory Mabe presented the following proposed Resolution Authorizing the Establishment of an Occupancy Tax and Tourism Development Authority for the Board's review and consideration:

### **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OCCUPANCY TAX AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY IN STOKES COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners of Stokes County, North Carolina,

RESOLVE that on the effective date of this resolution, that a countywide occupancy tax be levied pursuant to the authority granted by the North Carolina General Assembly under SB 154, Session Law 2023-144.

**WHEREAS**, the Stokes County Commissioners here-in establish an Occupancy Tax of six percent (6%) of the gross receipts derived from the rental of any room, lodging, or accommodations furnished by hotel, motel, bed and breakfast, vacation rentals, glamping site or similar place within the county that is subject to sales tax as imposed by the State under G. S. 105-164.4(a)(3), and;

**WHEREAS**, the industry of tourism is like any other industry, whose recognition and development are dependent upon public exposure and knowledge of availability of resources, and;

**WHEREAS**, the Stokes County Board of Commissioners wish to encourage an atmosphere conducive to prospective travelers who seek areas where the focus is on families, friends, agriculture, outdoors, and enjoyment of the communities around us, and;

**WHEREAS**, the following conditions apply upon the effective date of this Resolution:  
Administration. – A tax levied under this section shall be levied, administered, collected, and repealed as provided in G.S. 153A-155. The penalties provided in G.S. 153A-155 apply to a tax levied under this section.

Distribution and Use of Tax Revenue. – Stokes County shall, on a quarterly basis, remit the net proceeds of the occupancy tax to the Stokes County Tourism Development Authority. The Authority shall use at least two-thirds of the funds to promote travel and tourism and shall use the remainder for tourism-related expenditures in the county. The following definitions apply in this subsection:

- (1) Net proceeds. – Gross proceeds less the cost to the county of administering and collecting the tax, as determined by the finance officer, not to exceed three percent (3%) of the first five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) of gross proceeds collected each year and one percent (1%) of the remaining gross receipts collected each year.
- (2) Promote travel and tourism. – To advertise or market an area or activity, publish, and distribute pamphlets and other materials, conduct market research, or engage in similar promotional activities that attract tourists or business travelers to the area. The term includes administrative expenses incurred in engaging in the listed activities.
- (3) Tourism-related expenditures. – Expenditures that, in the judgment of the Tourism Development Authority, are designed to increase the use of accommodations, meeting facilities, or convention facilities in the county or to attract tourists or business travelers to the county. The term includes tourism-related capital expenditures

**WHEREAS**, the Stokes County Board of Commissioners establishes a Stokes County Tourism Development Authority that shall consist of seven (7) voting members and three (3) ex-officio, non-voting members where the following rules and terms shall apply:

- v Pursuant to the enabling legislation, at least one-third of the members shall be individuals who are affiliated with businesses that collect the tax in the county, and at least one-half of the members shall be individuals who are currently active in the promotion of travel and tourism in the county.
- v Three (3) out of the seven (7) members must be affiliated with the business of collecting the tax in the county and shall be appointed to the Authority and will serve two-year terms.
- v Four (4) out of the seven (7) members must be currently active in the promotion of travel and tourism in the county. These members should be involved in businesses or professions who have demonstrated an interest in tourism development in such a way that their expertise

would benefit the Authority. These members will serve three-year terms.

- o Of these four (4) members, the below breakdown shall be followed:

§ One (1) member shall be nominated by the governing body from each of the three incorporated municipalities including the Town of Danbury, the City of King, and the Town of Walnut Cove.

§ One (1) member shall be nominated by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.

v A member may serve additional terms without limits but must be reappointed by the Board of Commissioners for each additional term served.

v The Finance Director for Stokes County shall be the ex-officio finance officer of the Authority and hold non-voting powers.

v A tourism representative from the Economic Development and Tourism Office shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member and serve as an Advisor in assisting the Tourism Development Authority Chair and serving as the link between the County of Stokes and the Authority.

v A representative from the County Manager's Office shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member.

v All vacancies on the Authority shall be officially appointed by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.

v The Stokes County Board of Commissioners shall designate one member of the authority as chair at the creation of the Tourism Development Authority Board. Thereafter, the chairperson will be selected by the Authority Board.

v The Authority shall meet at the call of the chair and shall adopt rules of procedure to govern its meetings.

v The Authority shall report quarterly and at the close of the fiscal year to the Stokes County Board of Commissioners on its receipts and expenditures for the preceding quarter and for the year in such detail as approved by the Board of Commissioners.

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Stokes County Board of Commissioners hereby levy a six percent (6%) Occupancy Tax of the gross receipts derived from the rental of any room, lodging or accommodation furnished by a hotel, motel, bed and breakfast, vacation rental, glamping site or similar place within the county that is subject to sales tax as imposed by the State under G. S. 105-164.4(a)(3) for the uses and purposes hereinabove set forth; and that the Stokes County Tourism Development Authority is established and shall be composed of a seven (7) member Authority as outlined in this resolution, and shall become effective April 1, 2024, and remain in effect until an amendment or change is approved to this adopted resolution.

Adopted the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ by the **Stokes County Board of Commissioners**.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Brad Chandler - Chairman**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Keith Wood – Vice Chairman**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Sonya Cox - Commissioner**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Ronnie Mendenhall – Commissioner**

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Rick Morris – Commissioner**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Amber N. Brown – Clerk to the Board**

Tourism/Economic Development Analyst Tory Mabe presented the following information regarding the proposed resolution:

- Senate Bill 154, Session Law 2023-144 granted Stokes County the authority by NC General

Assembly to levy an occupancy tax rate of up to six (6) percent

- Two public informational meetings were held on the occupancy tax where the public and vacation rental owners were invited to learn more and ask questions regarding the issue
- A public hearing was held on Monday, January 8, 2024 at the regular meeting of the Stokes County Board of County Commissioners
- The TDA will be tasked with making suggestions and guiding the directions of how the funds received from the occupancy tax in the County will be spent to further market our destination, develop amenities, and additional attractions within Stokes County
- As you know, anytime you are inviting more people to stay overnight in a vacation rental, you are helping the economy because they are here visiting a local restaurant, attending an event or other activities in the County
- Hopefully, the TDA, once it is formed will be able to allot a portion of the one third of the funds that can be allotted toward projects to help to support some local events and further their marketing or potentially update sidewalk projects – use it as grant funds to leverage additional grant opportunities as Interim Economic Development Director Eddy McGee mentioned at the meeting held at the Arts Place – there is a lot of opportunity there
- Two thirds of the percent of the occupancy tax would be used toward marketing
- On page 2 of the proposed resolution, we outline the number of members to be on the TDA:
  - Suggesting seven (7) voting members with 3 ex-officio, non-voting members
  - Three (3) of the seven (7) members must be affiliated with business of collecting the tax in the county and shall be appointed to the Authority and will serve two-year terms
  - Four (4) of the seven (7) members must be currently active in the promotion of travel/tourism in the county and will serve three-year terms
    - These four (4) members should be involved in businesses or professions who have demonstrated an interest in tourism development in such a way that their expertise would benefit the Authority
    - These four (4) members must follow the following breakdown:
      - One (1) member shall be nominated by the governing body from each of the three (3) incorporated municipalities including the Town of Danbury, the City of King, and the Town of Walnut Cove
      - One (1) member shall be nominated by the Stokes County Board of County Commissioners

Vice Chairman Wood confirmed with Analyst Mabe that wording in the proposed resolution could be changed such as the number of members from each municipality.

Analyst Mabe continued:

- The resolution from the state talks about how the TDA membership should be formed with one third of the members being individuals being affiliated with the businesses that collect the tax in the county and at least one half of the members being individuals who are currently active in the promotion of travel and tourism in the county
- That is how we formed the membership in the proposed resolution – started with seven (7) for the total of board members and then one third of that seven (7) would be three (3) who are pretty much vacation rental owners who will apply to be on the Authority
- The other four (4) members of the half would be folks that have an interest in tourism
- The idea there would be that we are allowing the city/town councils to recommend and nominate someone to be on the TDA – in recommending that individual, they would have taken into consideration that the person being recommended to the Board has some interest in tourism – they don't necessarily have to be a vacation rental owner but someone with that one half of the individuals that are currently involved in promotion of travel and tourism in the county
- The other fourth member would be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners

- The legislation from the state outlines the following:
  - The Stokes County Board of Commissioners shall designate one member as the Authority chair and shall determine the compensation if any that will be paid to the members of the Authority
  - The Authority shall meet at the call of the chair
  - The Authority shall adopt rules and procedures to govern its meeting
  - The Finance Director of Stokes County will be ex-officio, non-voting member, a finance officer of the Authority – that would be one of the 3 ex-officio non-voting members
    - We also suggest that a representative from the county manager's office serve as ex-officio, non-voting member along with a tourism representative from Economic Development and Tourism Office serving as ex-officio, non-voting member
  - All nominations for appointment to the TDA must be approved by the Stokes County Board of County Commissioners
- The proposed resolution was a collaboration between me, Eddy, Richard, and Amber
- Be happy to answer any questions

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for discussion/questions/comments.

Vice Chairman Wood commented:

- Just want to throw a few things out
- Would ask Mayor McCraw to represent the mayors in this instance, why don't we ask the mayors from each city/town to serve on the TDA instead of them nominating someone – they know more about their city/towns than anyone
- Would like to hear Mayor McCraw's opinion, is that asking too much, I know their plates are full

Mayor McCraw responded:

- Personally, I would like to see one of our city council members serving on the TDA – possibly one that was just elected so that they could serve the three-year term
- Would say to leave it like it is and let the city/towns decide on the nomination

Vice Chairman Wood responded that he appreciated Rick's opinion.

Commissioner Mendenhall noted that he had no issues with the proposed resolution – looks good.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Looks good to me
- I think we need to bend over backwards to make sure this is a very transparent, fair process, where anybody that is interested can put in an application and we do a very open, straight forward analysis before we appoint these folks to make sure that we get the right people on the Authority
- I kind of alluded to earlier about how the TDA distributes the funds – keeping it flexible so that we can do smart things with the funds and not limit ourselves
- Not this exact amount here or that exact amount there, something where we can get the best bang for the buck
- That is all for me

Commissioner Cox commented:

- I think the makeup of the TDA is fine as outlined in the proposed resolution
- I would like to know how other counties (TDA) determine how the money is distributed and

should it be the resolution

Analyst Mabe responded:

- Rockingham County started collecting occupancy tax in 1991 and then in 2005 they created interlocal agreements with different incorporated towns what they would distribute to each town
- Rockingham County's occupancy tax is currently 3%

Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown added:

- The proposed resolution includes the following which reflects directly from the state legislation:
  - The Authority shall use at least two-thirds of the funds to promote travel and tourism and shall use the remainder for tourism-related expenditures in the county
- It has to be spent in those areas, that is why we included it in the proposed resolution
- Anything more specific than that is up to the TDA
- Unless you are talking about different percentages for different municipalities, then we can include that in the resolution

Analyst Mabe continued:

- In Surry County, the towns of Pilot Mountain, Elkin, and Mount Airy all submitted resolutions to start collecting occupancy tax before Surry County did in the unincorporated areas
- Surry County started collecting in 2009; they also have a partnership so there are 5 TDAs that does different things in the Surry County
- I have heard at times that gets confusing
- Surry County has used some of that one third to fund a sidewalk and seating area outside the Andy Griffin Mural that was newly painted on a wall
- I think that the Pilot Mountain TDA and the partnership has teamed up to put a little money toward that Pilot Mountain Outdoor Festival that they are having
- Event coordinators would be able to come before the TDA in hopes that they would be able to request funding
- Chris Cavanaugh, Magellan Strategy Group, told us that you want to make sure in the first couple of years that you build up a fund balance because most TDAs have about an 8% fund balance in case something bad happens like during COVID times

Chairman Chandler commented:

- Looks like we are doing different from Surry County
- Could we sign an interlocal agreement with the City of King and let them do their own TDA

Analyst Mabe responded:

- We can certainly explore that
- That is what Rockingham County has with Reidsville, Madison, and Eden
- It is part of their 3% occupancy tax that they allot to each town
- There is still just 1 TDA in Rockingham County whereas Surry County has 5 TDAs

Commissioner Mendenhall confirmed the following with Analyst Mabe:

- Pilot Mountain, Mount Airy, and Elkin each have a TDA
- Surry County has a TDA and then there is a TDA partnership

Commissioner Mendenhall added:

- Surry County is one of the counties in the state that has 3 school systems – Elkin City Schools, Mount Airy City Schools, and Surry County Schools

Commissioner Morris commented:

- When we started this, I was talking to you and Eddy, not sure if Amber was included in the conversation, but we were trying to be careful not to create a bunch of little pots of money that wouldn't be enough to do anything with – try to consolidate it into a big pot of money where you could do major projects or whatever
- I think it needs to be a balanced approach over a longer period of time, for instance, one year you may have want to spend more than 1% instead of just 1% like what King was asking for – based on some project that they are doing and the next year there may be a project somewhere in the county that would need more with the others not needing as much that particular year based on what has been spent before in that particular area
- I just want to make sure we keep it flexible and probably not try to break it up into a bunch of small pots that you really couldn't do much with it by itself without the combined effect of the total amount

Analyst Mabe responded:

- I think Eddy made a good point at the informational meeting at the Arts Place about being able to leverage some of those funds; Tax Administrator Brim has estimated that we could potentially receive approximately \$75,000 from a 6% occupancy tax – possibly use \$10,000 for a sidewalk or greenway project
- Chris Cavanaugh told us that there are some things that other communities are doing with their funds – using some of the occupancy tax funding with other fundings for projects; he also mentioned that in recent history, the counties were applying for occupancy tax just to help out with making things more streamlined

Vice Chairman Chandler commented:

- We have had comments from King today
- Don't believe anyone has heard any comments from the Town of Walnut Cove or Town of Danbury

Analyst Mabe responded:

- Amber and I went around in 2023 to each of the city/town councils
- First presentation was to the Town of Danbury – they were on board with the County taking care of it all because we have the Tax Office and the Finance Office to keep up with all the data/funding from the tax coming in from their rentals – Town of Danbury has a very minimal staff down there and no one to manage any of it
- Town of Walnut Cove was also on board in a similar fashion to the Town of Danbury
- When we presented it to the City of King, they were receptive to the whole idea and wanted to be included along the way and we have hopefully outlined that in this proposed resolution that we want to include and represent everyone inclusively as we have been doing from Economic Development in terms of promoting tourism under the county's budget

Vice Chairman Chandler continued:

- Questioned the City of King representatives who were in attendance for the meeting, had they talked about this on their agenda regarding what the city wanted to do

Mayor Rick McCraw responded:

- Have not discussed it as an agenda item, was waiting to get a representative appointed to the TDA to get more information

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Confirmed with Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown that staff was requesting the



- proposed resolution be on the action agenda for the next meeting, not today
- Agreed that would be better in order to give the Board time to discussion this further with these folks

Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown commented:

- The plan is to start collecting the tax in April 2024
- Once the resolution is approved, it can be advertised to make sure everybody knows what is happening and allowing the city/towns and the Board of Commissioners enough time to nominate someone to serve on the TDA
- Still have several steps to complete before April when we start collecting

Analyst Mabe added:

- Spoke with Rockingham County, whose TDA is set up in about the same way that this one would potentially be regarding our proposed resolution
- They liked the text and the idea of our proposed resolution and stated that they would like to amend part of their resolution to add some of our components

Chairman Chandler confirmed there were no other questions/comments from the Board.

Chairman Chandler, with full consensus of the Board, directed Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown to place the item on the February 12<sup>th</sup> action agenda.

### **County Emails for Members of the Board of Commissioners**

Chairman Chandler turned the floor over to Commissioner Cox who requested the item be placed on today's agenda.

Commissioner Cox presented the following comments:

- Thought it might be appropriate to talk about this since recently we had several emails coming in
- Have been questioned why different board members had different email addresses and the fact that we all did not have county email addresses
- That got me thinking on the subject because I know Rick mentioned that some of the emails went into his junk mail and he had to retrieve them or look for some of the emails
- I know one time that we did have a public information request where basically, the ones that had the county email address was the ones that IT was able to review to look for certain emails for that subject and then it was up to other individual board members to go through their own emails – kind of police themselves
- This does not seem as transparent as I think I would like it to be and other people in the community would like it to be
- Have done a little bit of research on it, it just seems that best practice seems to be for anybody in government to use the emails that are given to them by the county, state, federal government – whatever government the person is in
- In talking with Amber, confirmed that all county employees are required to use the county email address given to them for county business – not a personal email address
- Just seems like we should model what we ask of our employees to do which is to use the county email address given to them for county business
- I think it is still fine to have personal email addresses for some things but in general if you are doing county business, we should be required to use the county email address provided by the county
- This way, it can be archived – how it should be and kept for as long a period of time as required – it is a public record

- Reiterated that our emails are public records
- It brings in the question if you are using your own personal email address – how they are being stored, who has access to them, if they are archived securely, is there any way to have any unauthorized access to those personal email addresses
- If it is a county email address, there are no questions
- They are safely archived and there is no unauthorized access to them
- It is just about protecting the records and protecting who has access to the records more than anything to me
- It is nothing personal to me about anybody using it or not using it
- I know it can be an inconvenience to have more than one email address – keeping them separate
- Jennifer is here today, and we can always ask her opinion in this matter from a legal standpoint if we ever had a court issue before a judge or they ask for stuff
- My question is what would happen if we said to a judge that we don't know because we don't have those records

Attorney Jennifer Michaud responded:

- The potential issues that I see with a personal email address versus a county-maintained email address is that when you send something from your personal email address and it is county business, then if someone does make a public records request or if we were in the midst of litigation, there is a subpoena that is issued
- Any of your personal emails could be subject basically so it can cast a much wider net into some things that may have nothing to do with what the public records request is for
- But because it is being sent from a personal email address, it can sort of get sucked in and it sort of, in my opinion, would trample on some of your personal liberties
- You might be sending an email that you might not want that particular email to be public record
- Using a personal email address to conduct county business that essentially makes things public record that would not normally be public record
- In just doing a little research on this, it looks like that the General Assembly guidance is saying what the North Carolina Archives and the School of Government says - that the best practice is to avoid using a personal or private email account for public business
- There is not necessarily a particular statute or anything like that on point but the general guidance seems to be to try to segregate those as much as we can
- I did check with County Attorney Browder, and he said he thought that might be a good idea to use the county email address for county business
- It is certainly up to your discretion as a Board as to how or if you guys want to implement that

Commissioner Morris questioned Attorney Michaud if it was illegal to use your personal email address.

Attorney Michaud responded:

- It is not
- It is perfectly legal to use it
- I guess it is sort of a risk benefit analysis – that would sort of fall to you guys rather than a legal analysis, in using your personal email address, do you want to deal with some of potential risks of dealing with your personal emails
- It is a discretionary thing

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for other discussion/questions/comments.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- I do remember when I was superintendent of the school system, my email address read something like - [RonnieMendenhall@stokescountyschools.com](mailto:RonnieMendenhall@stokescountyschools.com) – a professional email address
- I don't use the county email address as a commissioner, I use my personal email address
- Publicly, I am saying that I use my own personal email address
- I get everything – all emails
- I do understand Commissioner Cox's concern
- I can give you an example, when we went through the recent school situation a few weeks ago, it all came through to me – all the emails that were sent out from different people from all over the county – had hundreds of emails from different parts of the county
- It all shot through my personal email account
- I read each one
- When someone sends me an email, if they go to the trouble to send me an email, I am going to read it and if there is any way possible, I am going to reply back to that person so they will know that I got it
- However, in that situation with the schools – I can tell you up front that I had 400 to 500 emails on that subject
- I did read them all
- When I was with the school system, it went through the school system - [@stokescountyschools.com](mailto:@stokescountyschools.com)
- That is all I have

Vice Chairman Wood commented:

- I use my personal email for the following reasons:
  - I am still working, and I do not need 3 email accounts
  - Work alone with 250 to 500 emails a day
  - Personally, I wish I could eliminate half of the garbage that I get
  - The second reason I like it is that I read my emails on my personal phone quickly instead of connecting so I see what is going on
  - For some reason, there is a delay from some things that I get from you – Amber
  - Most of it comes through instance, I don't think it is the county, I think it is just the internet system alone
  - Let me get through this year then when I retire, I will not have another phone and all of those emails – I can tell you that you can spend your whole life reading emails and cleaning them up
- That is my opinion

Vice Chairman Chandler commented:

- From day one, I ran on open and transparent government
- From day one, [bchandleerstokescountygovernment](mailto:bchandleerstokescountygovernment)
- It is a hot topic throughout the state, that was on the agenda at the meeting that I attended Thursday
- Just like Jennifer said, it is a best practice thing
- I think it was the Moore County attorney that presented the information at the meeting who was just telling the nightmares, especially with litigation, of using their personal email address
- Personally, when I was in Fayetteville, there was no way I would want to put my personal email address in jeopardy with all the litigation that goes on down there with public records request
- It is so much easier, you don't get bugged, for instance, if you have a private email system, you are going to get harassed by legal to make sure that everything is, this way IT takes care of it – what is what is, and you are done with it

- But you don't have to

Vice Chairman Wood added:

- As we are always referring to what other counties do, I did check with Alleghany County does not have none of them

Chairman Chandler agreed that there are a lot of counties that don't have them.

Commissioner Cox commented:

- My thought was that if we are going to require everyone that works for the county to do it – we have an email policy in place that even goes so far as to tell them how the signature has to be – I think it tells everyone it has to have your name, your title, and other certain things just like the school system was
- It also has to say that anything could be subject to a public records request, and it is a public record, all that should be on all of our emails whether is it is a private personal email or a county email
- Our signature should say all that because our policy says that
- We are requiring all of our department heads to do that, but we are not doing it, we are not following it
- I just think that we should all be on the same page
- If we are requiring it, we should model that and do it ourselves
- I just don't understand how if something is subject to a public records request, in my opinion, if that happens again and we are using our personal emails, we should have to turn over our username and password to IT and let them search our personal email
- I don't think any of us really want to do that
- I am not advocating that we do that, I am just saying that is what a company would do if you were a company employee that insisted on using your private email address

Vice Chairman Chandler confirmed with Commissioner Cox that she did have the county email address and noted that she and he were the only two on the Board that use the county email address.

Commissioner Cox continued:

- I am just saying we should be using technology to enhance transparency and accountability of the government instead of using it to thwart public access to the government and public records because that is what it looks like on the outside looking in
- I am not saying that anyone is doing that, and I know it is not purposeful, it is just like Vice Chairman Wood noted that it is a pain in the butt to have 3 email addresses – I get that
- In the event of a public records request, I know how that was handled the last time and I don't know that is appropriate to police ourselves and say these are the emails – here you go, or I don't have any emails, sorry

Chairman Chandler commented:

- If it is litigation, it goes more than just your honor code

Commissioner Cox continued:

- If it goes into litigation and you go before a judge and you say I don't know because all these people are using their personal emails, so we have no clue; I think you are opening yourself up

Chairman Chandler added:

- I don't think anybody would go in front of a judge and would say that

Commissioner Cox added that she did not want to go in front of a judge and say that.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- I have a personal email address that I have and has been posted on the county website for a long time
- I have not had any issues with communication
- I am not concerned about the risk associated with litigation
- I want to keep using my personal email
- That is my vote when we get to it

Chairman Chandler asked Board members if there were any further discussion/comments.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- When I was in the school system, I had just gotten so used to how the school system went

Commissioner Cox added that with the school system you did not have a choice .

Commissioner Mendenhall continued:

- Agreed as Commissioner Cox stated, I did not have a choice
- For the 5 years as superintendent, my emails came through the school system
- As superintendent, I was the model, and I could not say that I am using my personal email but the 1,100 employees under beneath me have got to go another way
- I used the same email system that everyone else did in the school system
- This being my 8<sup>th</sup> year as a commissioner, I have used my personal email during my entire time as a commissioner
- I know there is a chance of things being subpoenaed
- I have been elected twice as chairman for the county commissioners during the past 8 years; however, even as chairman, I used by personal email address
- I am sort of like Commissioner Morris and Vice Chairman Wood on this matter
- But if the vote goes for everyone to use the county email address, I will certainly do it
- That is not a problem
- At this point, I prefer to keep using my personal email address
- If the other members want to go to using the county email address only, I will go with you
- It is not a big deal to me

Commissioner Cox added:

- I am not making a big deal about it; I am just throwing it out there because I think it could be something down the line
- I was asked about it and did not have a good answer
- Thought I would bring it up for discussion and that is what we are doing
- If there is not enough thought about why it would make sense for everyone to be doing the same thing or whatever

Chairman Chandler commented:

- Sometimes, you have to just do what is best for yourself
- That is what I am doing

Commissioner Cox added exactly.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- One of the complaints that I have heard in the past regarding previous commissioners that I certainly would not name anyone, is that they all had county emails but there was never any response back from the commissioners to the citizens – don't think they ever checked them – heard that on more than one occasion

Chairman Chandler added that can be problematic, too.

Commissioner Cox added:

- There is really no difference, I have my county email on my phone
- I can check it from my phone, I don't have to have the laptop to check them
- It is nothing to it, just log in from your phone and check your email
- I just like to keep those emails separate, if it went into my personal email account, there is a lot bigger chance that I would miss something
- If it is county business and it comes through the county email and kept separate, I am not going to miss it
- If it comes in with all the coupons from all those places, I might miss something

With no further discussion/comments, Chairman Chandler, with full consensus from the Board, stated that no action will be taken at this time regarding County Emails for Members of the Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Cox noted that we could bring it back up when Vice Chairman Wood retires.

Chairman Chandler added it was a very good discussion for the Board to have.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Noted that would not affect him as he did not file for re-election.
- Agreed with the Chairman Chandler, it was a very good discussion for the Board to have

Commissioner Cox added:

- One thing that I did mention to Jennifer, and she is going to check into it – is how long the county archives our emails for those types of reasons

Vice Chairman Wood added that he thought all emails were available for ever.

Attorney Michaud responded:

- Have been talking to Amber about it, emails are weird, depending on the type of information – there are different record retention requirements
- Something that has to do with a contract might have a longer retention period than just like a memo
- Going to check with the School of Government and see if there are any general guidelines that we need to be following for email retentions

Vice Chairman Wood noted it is unreal what some companies find out when they go to checking an employee's emails – have seen a lot of people lose their jobs.

Chairman Chandler noted that it needed to be in our county policies.

### **Medical Services Consulting Agreement**

Chairman Chandler turned the floor over to Commissioner Morris regarding the hiring of a consulting group to advise the Board on the best path forward for county-owned medical facilities

in Danbury, King, and Pine Hall as the feasibility study is completed. (copy of Medical Services Consulting Agreement can be obtained from the Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners or on the January 22<sup>nd</sup> agenda on the county website)

Commissioner Morris presented the following comments:

- Noted that a medical services consulting agreement was provided to the Board and can certainly be provided to the public
- The medical services consulting agreement is with a company called Turning Point that we have work with some and recommended by our group, HFG, that is doing the feasibility study
- This consulting group would help us to determine our path forward with medical services in the County, in King, in Pine Hall – including the hospital
- The contract is basically just a scope of work for them to advise us as we develop our strategy for what we do with the completion of the feasibility study
- Think we need to get talking with them fairly quickly and would request it be moved to action today if the no other Board member sees any issues

With no discussion, it was consensus of the Board that the proposed agreement needed to be moved to the action agenda today.

Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown commented:

- Would need to also approve the funding for the agreement on Budget Amendment #43 which has also been provided to the Board – also needs to be moved to the action agenda today

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for any further discussion/questions/comments.

With no further discussion, Chairman Chandler directed Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown to place the agreement with Turning Point and Budget Amendment #43 on today's action agenda.

### **Walnut Cove Planning and Zoning Board ETJ Appointments**

Chairman Chandler stated before the Board took up this issue today, he needed to provide some information that he had received from Walnut Cove Commissioner Chad Jarvis.

Chairman Chandler commented:

- Commissioner Jarvis informed him that he had another person that had send an email expressing interest to serving as the ETJ Appointments on the Walnut Cove Planning and Zoning Board
- Confirmed with Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown that she had received only two applications
- Commissioner Jarvis had noted that there were three interested

The Board discussed tabling the appointment until the next meeting in order to receive the third applicant.

Chairman Chandler noted it was the consensus of the Board to table the item until the next meeting.

Chairman Chandler, with full consensus of the Board, directed Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown to place the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) for the Walnut Cove Planning and Zoning Board Appointments on the February 12<sup>th</sup> discussion agenda.

### **ACTION 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.

### **Medical Services Consulting Agreement**

Chairman Chandler entertained a motion to approve the Medical Services Consulting Agreement with Turning Point and Budget Amendment #43 presented at today's meeting.

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to approve the Medical Services Consulting Agreement with Turning Point and Budget Amendment #43 presented at today's meeting. Vice Chairman Wood seconded the motion.

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for any further discussion/questions/comments.

With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Chairman Chandler entertained a motion to enter closed session.

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to enter closed session for the following:

- To prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this State or of the United States, or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1)
- To consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3)

Vice Chairman Wood seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Chandler recessed the meeting for a five-minute break before going into closed session.

The Board entered closed session.

### **Adjournment**

The Board reentered the open portion of the meeting.

With no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Chandler entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to adjourn the meeting. Vice Chairman Wood seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

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**Amber Brown**  
**Clerk to the Board**

**Brad Chandler**  
**Chair**

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA )  
 )  
COUNTY OF STOKES )  
 )

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS  
STOKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
DANBURY, NORTH CAROLINA  
TUESDAY FEBRUARY 6, 2024

The Board of Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a Planning Meeting in the Commissioners' Chambers of the Ronald Wilson Reagan Memorial Building (Administration Building) located in Danbury, North Carolina on Tuesday February 6, 2024 at 6:00 pm with the following members present:

Chairman Brad Chandler  
Vice Chairman Keith Wood  
Commissioner Sonya Cox  
Commissioner Ronnie Mendenhall  
Commissioner Rick Morris

County Personnel in Attendance:  
Interim County Manager Amber Brown  
Planning Director Eric Nance

Chairman Chandler called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Morris invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **INVOCATION**

Chairman Chandler invited those in attendance to join the Board in the invocation, if so desired.

Vice Chairman Wood delivered the invocation.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

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

No conflicts of interest were stated by the Board.

## **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Chandler entertained a motion to approve tonight's agenda.

Commissioner Morris moved to approve the agenda as presented. Commissioner Mendenhall seconded the motion.

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for discussion/questions/comments.

With no discussion, the motion passed as presented unanimously.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for public comments.

There was no one signed up to speak during public comments.

With no speakers, Chairman Chandler closed the public comments.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Chairman Chandler confirmed with Planning Director Eric Nance that there was no old business for tonight's meeting.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Rezoning Request – P. Goins LLC and S. Goins LLC - #23-1082 – Public Hearing**

Chairman Chandler noted there was no one signed up to speak during Public Hearing for Rezoning Request #23-1082 – P. Goins LLC and S. Goins LLC – Rezone approximately 32.75 +/- acres from Residential Agricultural (RA) to Residential Agricultural- Conditional Zoning (RA-CZ) located at 1315 Goinstown Road, Sandy Ridge, NC to build a winery with food/beverage operations and overnight guest rooms.

### **Rezoning Request – P. Goins LLC and S. Goins LLC - #23-1082 -Presentation/Discussion**

Chairman Chandler turned the floor over to Planning Director Eric Nance to present the Rezoning Request – P. Goins LLC and S. Goins LLC - Residential Agricultural (RA) to Residential Agricultural Conditional Zoning (RA-CZ).

Planning Director Eric Nance presented the following information regarding the Rezoning Request:

**REQUEST:** Request by applicants P. Goins LLC and S. Goins LLC to rezone approximately 32.75 +/- acres identified as tax parcels 6090-56-2245 and 6090-56-3189 from Residential Agricultural (RA) to Residential Agricultural-Conditional Zoning (RA-CZ). This request is to build a winery with food/beverage operations and overnight guest rooms.

**SITE OWNER:** P. Goins LLC and S. Goins LLC  
**APPLICANTS:** P. Goins LLC and S. Goins LLC  
**SITE LOCATION:** 1315 Goinstown Road, Sandy Ridge, NC 27046  
**PIN #:** 6090-56-2245 and 6090-56-3189  
**DEED BOOK:** 766 **PAGE:** 890 **TOWNSHIP:** Snow Creek

**SITE INFORMATION:**

**TOTAL PARCEL SIZE:** Approximately 32.75 acres.

**REZONING PARCEL SIZE:** 32.75

**PROPOSED DISTRICT:** Residential Agricultural-Conditional Zoning (RA-CZ)

**FLOOD HAZARD AREA:** N/A

**WATERSHED DISTRICT:** N/A

**SURROUNDING LAND USE:** The surrounding land use consists of residential and agricultural development.

**ISSUES TO CONSIDER:**

- Supports business friendly objective as stated in the Stokes County 2035 comprehensive plan.
- Potential tax base increase due to expansion of Commercial Property.
- Supports Agritourism
- Job potential for Stokes County

**STAFF COMMENTS:** This is a rezoning from Residential Agricultural (RA) to Residential Agricultural-Conditional Rezoning (RA-CZ) for the construction of a winery with food/beverage operations and overnight guest rooms. Planning staff sees no problem with this request in that the expansion of a winery with food/beverage operations and overnight guest rooms are in line with the long-range plan, because it supports the business-friendly objective as stated in the Stokes County 2035 Comprehensive Plan as well as supporting Agritourism and that this proposal provides potential tax base increase due to the expansion of Commercial Property, it is reasonable and in the public interest, and would provide jobs for Stokes County.

**PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING:** The Public Meeting for this proposal was held on Wednesday, December 20, 2023, at 3:00 pm at Carrollwood Farms Operations Building.

Attendance representing Carrollwood Farms:

- Roy Carroll, Owner
- Madison Carroll Synder, Chief of Staff for the Carroll Companies
- Karl Kazaks, Farm Manager for Carrollwood Farms

Attendance from the community:

- Bobby Hickman – 1405 Goinstown Road, Sandy Ridge, NC
- Billy Hickman – 1349 Goinstown Road, Sandy Ridge, NC

Roy Carroll discussed the following comments:

- Have purchase the Steve Goins property

- Plans are to build a winery
- Current zoning is Residential Agricultural
- Proposed zoning is Residential Agricultural-Conditional Use
- Plans are to add 16 overnight guest rooms and a food/beverage operation

Questions and Discussion with Billy and Bobby Hickman:

- Confirmed with Mr. Carroll that the Goinstown Road needs to be paved for safety reasons and that this would be discussed further with the County
- Confirmed with Mr. Carroll that he plans to build his forever home somewhere on the property when he retires

### **STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY AND REASONABLENESS**

The Board must determine if the rezoning petition meets the requirements of the Stokes County 2035 Comprehensive Plan as to its consistency with the current development patterns and to the appropriateness of the request regarding the guide. Please make all motions for approval or disapproval referencing the petitions of consistency or non-consistency with the Stokes County 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

**Case No. #23-1082**

**Applicant:** P. Goins LLC and S. Goins LLC

**Property Owner:** P. Goins LLC and S. Goins LLC

**Parcel IDs#** 6090-56-2245 and 6090-56-3189

**Location:** 1315 Goinstown Road, Sandy Ridge, NC 27046

**Proposed Amendment:** Rezone 32.75 acres from RA to RA-CZ for the construction of a winery with food/beverage operations and overnight guest rooms.

The Stokes County 2035 Comprehensive Plan identifies portions of the county through the Land Use Transect methodology, which shows transition zones between rural areas and more urbanized areas of the county. The proposed rezoning is best described as being in the transect zone identified as Reserved Lands and Conservation area in the voluntary agricultural district. This area is intended for low-density residential growth and includes areas with limited access to water and sewer infrastructure. The proposed development is for a winery with food/beverage operations and overnight guest rooms. This application appears to be a reasonable request that is in the public interest.

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for discussion/questions/comments.

There were no questions from Board members.

Planning Director Nance noted that Madison Snyder, Chief of Staff for the Carroll Companies, had requested to address the Board regarding the proposed winery.

Ms. Snyder presented the following comments:

- Appreciate the opportunity to speak to the Board tonight
- Know there has been talk about the Carrollwood Project
- Feel this is a perfect fit with the current Agritourism push

- Have discussed with Economic Development Analyst Tory Mabe how important Agritourism is for Stokes County – to show out of towners the beauty that Stokes County has to offer
- We are very excited about this particle parcel because the winery is going to have an expansive veranda where people can enjoy a glass of wine or a light lunch with a beautiful view of the mountains
- We think this project is going to make a huge impact
- We are planning about 25 overnight guest rooms, a bistro with a casual dining for breakfast and lunch along with a fine dining restaurant for evening
- It is also going to include a spa with six to eight treatment rooms for spa services
- We feel this will be another location in the County to host weddings, formal events, and corporate retreats
- It is our goal for this to be a 7-day a week business
- We will certainly be open to the public for any day visitors
- We want people to stay for a couple of days to enjoy the full beauty of everything
- Will be happy to answer any questions

Commissioner Cox commented:

- Questioned Ms. Snyder further about the building for the winery, the number of guest rooms, and any update information about the equestrian center

Ms. Snyder responded:

- The winery will consist of one building that will house about 15-20 guest rooms which will probably be all suites – all having their own fireplace, soaking tub, steam showers – very nice
- Know that Roy was out at the site this week looking at possibly shifting the equestrian center building a little bit in order to try to save some money on the site work costs which is going to have an extensive dirt moving and looking at saving some trees he wanted to keep
- Planning to break ground definitely in the first half of this year – general programming for the facilities is still the same

Commissioner Cox continued:

- Confirmed with Madison that the location of the equestrian center is still in the same location, just a little shifting - a matter of yards
- Questioned where the winery will be located on the property from the equestrian center

Ms. Snyder responded:

- The equestrian center is to be located in the exact center of the property
- The winery will be located slightly north of the equestrian center
- The winery will sit between the road that was closed (Victory Hill Church Road) and the cabin that is located on the property
- Had a great meeting with the Hickman Brothers who were the only people that attended the public information meeting

- This location has no neighbors except for ourselves so there will be very minimal impact regarding neighbors

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Confirmed with Madison that visitors could walk to the winery from equestrian center, but plans are to have an on-site shuttle service to run people back and forth along with horseback riding, ATVs, and other creative ways that the guest would enjoy like walking trails
- Confirmed with Madison that once all the plans are finalized, they will break ground and hit the ground running
- I am sure Roy will want to get a master plan out there to show how all these individual pieces fit together

Commissioner Morris added that we would all be interested in that but not prematurely.

Commissioner Cox added:

- I think that is a good idea, we have a big shopping center project going up in King and everyone is so anxious to know what is going to be in it
- But they are waiting to make sure what it will have before announcing the shops in case something changes
- I can understand why he is wanting to wait to see exactly how the project is going to be before you announce anything
- Confirmed with Madison that things are moving along

Planning Director Nance noted that the Planning Board unanimously approved the rezoning request.

Ms. Synder commented:

- For Carrollwood Farms as a whole, there is a preliminary projection for this project as a whole will create between 120 to 150 jobs

### **Rezoning Request – P. Goins LLC and S. Goins LLC - #23-1082 - Action**

Chairman Chandler entertained a motion regarding the Rezoning Request #23-1082 for P. Goins LLC and S. Goins LLC.

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to approve the Rezoning Request #23-1082 P. Goins LLC and S. Goins LLC (approximately 32.75 +/- acres) from Residential Agricultural (RA) to Residential Agricultural-Conditional Zoning (RA-CZ) at 1315 Goinstown Road with the request being reasonable and fits into the Stokes County 2035 Comprehensive Plan.

Vice Chairman Wood seconded the motion.

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for any further discussion/questions/comments.

With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Chairman Chandler confirmed with other members and Planning Director Nance that there was no new business for the meeting tonight.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Chandler entertained a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Morris seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

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**Amber Brown**

**Clerk to the Board**

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**Brad Chandler**

**Chairman**





**Board of County Commissioners  
February 12, 2024  
6:00 PM**

**Item number: VI.b.**

**Budget Amendments**

Contact: Lisa Lankford, Finance Director

Summary:

Budget Amendment #44 To appropriate insurance claim funds

Budget Amendment #45 To allocate funds received from the Duke Energy Foundation, Inc.

Budget Amendment #46 To transfer funds from Service District Fund Balance to pay off loan for Pinnacle Volunteer Fire

Budget Amendment #47 To transfer funds for Workers' Compensation Insurance and costs of deductibles for Public Officials Liability

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Budget Amendments #44-47	2/9/2024	Cover Memo

## STOKES COUNTY-BUDGET AMENDMENT

BE IT ORDAINED by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners that the following amendment be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024

Section 1. To amend the General Fund, the expenditures are to be changed as follows:

Account Number	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	CURRENT BUDGETED AMOUNT	INCREASE (DECREASE)	AS AMENDED
100.4310.351	Maint. & Repairs Auto Sheriff's Office	\$ 112,789.60	\$ 842.05	\$ 113,631.65
TOTALS		<u>\$ 112,789.60</u>	<u>\$ 842.05</u>	<u>\$ 113,631.65</u>

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

To appropriate insurance claim funds for deer accident  
Vehicle # 7058  
Claim #4A2401Q2XTZ-0001

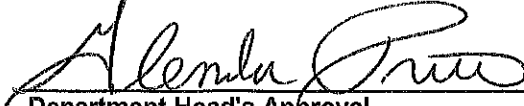
This will result in a net increase of \$842.05 in the expenditures and other financial use of the County's annual budget. To provide the additional revenue for the above, the following revenues will increase. These revenues have already been received or are verified they will be received in this fiscal year.

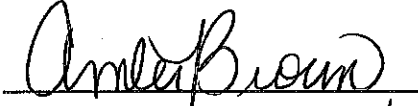
Account Number	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	CURRENT BUDGETED AMOUNT	INCREASE (DECREASE)	AS AMENDED
100.3839.850	Insurance Claims General Fund	\$ 3,453.97	\$ 842.05	\$ 4,296.02
TOTALS		<u>\$ 3,453.97</u>	<u>\$ 842.05</u>	<u>\$ 4,296.02</u>

SECTION 2. Copies of this amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk of the Board of Commissioners, Budget Officer and to the Finance Director.

Adopted this 12th day of February, 2024 .

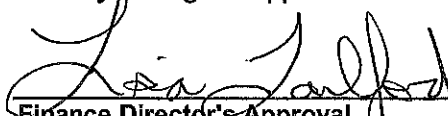
Verified by the Clerk of the Board

  
Department Head's Approval

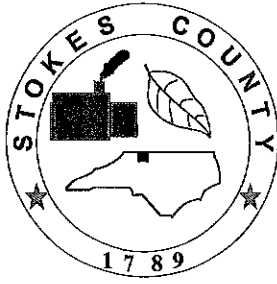
  
Date 2/7/24

  
County Manager's Approval

2/9/24  
Date

  
Finance Director's Approval

2/7/24  
Date



*Stokes County*  
*Purchasing Department*

Memorandum

To: Lisa Lankford, Finance Director

From: Glenda Pruitt, Purchasing/Project Manager

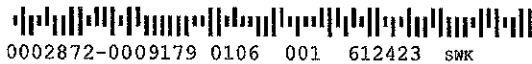
Date: February 6, 2024

Re: Budget Amendment Insurance Claim

Attached is a budget amendment and copy of the check in the amount of \$842.05 which is in reference to claim number 4A2401Q2XTZ-0001. The claim was for a deer accident on September 16, 2023. Check was deposited into insurance claims 100.3839.850 and needs to be moved to maintenance and repair of auto 100.4310.351 in the Sheriff's Office budget.

If you need any additional information, please let me know.

Sedgwick Claims Management Services, Inc  
P O Box 14436  
Lexington, KY 40512-4436



STOKES COUNTY  
PO BOX 20  
DANBURY NC 27016

DATE	CHECK AMOUNT	CHECK NUMBER
01/29/2024	842.05	140431270
PAYEE	TAX ID	
STOKES COUNTY	None	
SCMS UNIT	PAGE	
184 Sedgwick Claims Management Services, Inc	01 of 01	

Claimant Name	Loss Date	Claim Number
STOKES COUNTY	09/16/2023	4A2401Q2XTZ-0001
Amt Paid: 842.05	Description: Miscellaneous CM/PI	
Dates: 09/16/2023 - 09/16/2023	Comment: 2023 Ford interceptor VIN# 9363 - repairs	

100.3839.850 Ins Claims

SWK.FRM.SDM.00.NP



THE FACE OF THIS CHECK IS PRINTED BLUE. THE BACK CONTAINS A SIMULATED WATERMARK. SEE BACK FOR DETAILS

Sedgwick Claims Management Services, Inc  
On behalf of  
NCACC Liability and Property Pool

ORIGIN Wells Fargo Bank, N.A.  
1841278

VOID AFTER 60 DAYS

DATE: 01/29/2024  
140431270  
62-22  
311

PAY: \*\*\*\*\*EIGHT HUNDRED FORTY TWO AND 05/100 DOLLARS

\$842.05

PAY TO THE ORDER OF STOKES COUNTY

Sedgwick

MEMO: \_\_\_\_\_

NC Counties of Liability and P, Principal  
Sedgwick Claims Management Services, Inc., Agent By:

2198657582

140431270 031100225 2079950059703

## STOKES COUNTY-BUDGET AMENDMENT

BE IT ORDAINED by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners that the following amendment be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

Section 1. To amend the General Fund, the expenditures are to be changed as follows:

Account Number	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	CURRENT BUDGETED AMOUNT	INCREASE (DECREASE)	AS AMENDED
<b>GENERAL FUND</b>				
	Economic Development			
100.4920.444	Dan River - Mlle Marker Project	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
		\$ -		\$ -
	Total	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

To allocate funds received from the Duke Energy Foundation, Inc.

This will result in a net increase of \$10,000.00 in the expenditures and other financial use to the County's annual budget. To provide the additional revenue for the above, the following revenues will increase. These revenues have already been received or are verified they will be received in this fiscal year.

Account Number	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	CURRENT BUDGETED AMOUNT	INCREASE (DECREASE)	AS AMENDED
<b>General Fund</b>				
100.3301.431	Economic Development-Duke Energy Foudation	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
		\$ -		\$ -
				\$ -
				\$ -
	TOTALS	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00

SECTION 2. Copies of this amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk of the Board of Commissioners, Budget Officer and to the Finance Director.

Adopted this 12th day of February, 2024.

Verified by the Clerk of the Board

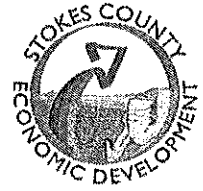
Jory L. Male 2/9/24  
Department Head's Approval Date

Amelia Brown 2/9/24  
County Manager's Approval Date

James Zafford 2/9/24  
Finance Director's Approval Date

Amelia Brown

Stokes County Economic Development & Tourism  
1014 Main Street  
PO Box 20  
Danbury, NC 27016  
336.593.2496



2/9/2024

Dear: Commissioners

The Stokes County Economic Development Department received a grant in the amount of \$10,000 from the Duke Energy Foundation as part of the Vibrant Economies Grant Program. This grant will be utilized to develop the Dan River Mile Marker program and implement the project along the heavily traveled areas of the river in Stokes County from Highway 268 and Highway 89 to the Pitzer Road River Access that Duke Energy funded and developed for the county. Economic Development applied for this grant in October 2023 and received the grant award at a check presentation by Jimmy Flythe on December 18, 2023.

Budget Amendment #45 allocates funds received into an account that can be utilized to fulfil the terms of the grant application in the time frame allowed for completion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Tory L. Mabe'.

Tory Mabe  
Economic Development & Tourism Tech Analyst

[www.StokesEDC.com](http://www.StokesEDC.com)

#45  
American Online Giving Foundation  
611 Meredith Rd NE #700  
Calgary, AB T2E 2W5

0102666 01 RE 0.547 \*\*AUTO H2 1 5421 27016-002020 2 -P02668 C06

PAGE 1 OF 2



County of Stokes  
1014 Main Street PO Box 20  
Danbury NC 27016-0020

AMERICAN ONLINE GIVING FOUNDATION, INC. 40 EAST MAIN STREET, SUITE 887, NEWARK, DE, 19711, US			Charity ID: 840-BSV_GOV_EIN_566000340_0001	
Name County of Stokes	Date MM-DD-YYYY 01-25-2024	Check # 0000222416	Amount USD \$*****10,000.00	Disbursement ID CD2GWZY6RR
The Duke Energy Foundation Inc				
<p>You have received this cheque from the American Online Giving Foundation a Partner Foundation of the Benevity Giving Platform. This disbursement includes donations from employees and/or matching funds from at least one of Benevity's corporate clients (listed above). These companies and applicable privacy laws require us to confirm your organization's identity before releasing any confidential information. To see reports and donor information on this and other donations, please activate your Charity Profile at <a href="https://causes.benevity.org">causes.benevity.org</a>.</p> <p>By accepting these funds, your are agreeing to the terms of use at the Benevity Causes Portal, located here: <a href="https://causes.benevity.org/terms-of-use">causes.benevity.org/terms-of-use</a>.</p>				

100.3301.431

DETACH AND RETAIN THIS STUB FOR YOUR RECORDS

CHECK # 0000222416 ATTACHED BELOW

American Online Giving Foundation  
611 Meredith Rd NE #700  
Calgary, AB T2E 2W5

62-20  
311

NO. 0000222416

Date 01 25 2024  
MM DD YYYY

Ten Thousand and 00/100 Dollars

Disbursement ID CD2GWZY6RR

PAY TO THE ORDER OF County of Stokes  
1014 Main Street PO Box 20  
Danbury NC 27016

USD

\$\*\*\*\*\*10,000.00

Void After 180 days

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE

CITIBANK, N.A.  
ONE PENN'S WAY, NEW CASTLE, DE 19720

⑈0000222416⑈ ⑆031100209⑆

54027129⑈

## STOKES COUNTY-BUDGET AMENDMENT

BE IT ORDAINED by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners that the following amendment be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

Section 1. To amend the General Fund, the expenditures are to be changed as follows:

Account Number	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	CURRENT BUDGETED AMOUNT	INCREASE (DECREASE)	AS AMENDED
	Service District Fund			
209.4340.510	Capital Outlay Equipment	\$ 371,429.29	\$ 141,480.60	\$ 512,909.89
		\$ -		\$ -
	Total	\$ 371,429.29	\$ 141,480.60	\$ 512,909.89

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

To transfer funds from Service District Fund Balance to pay off loan for Pinnacle Volunteer Fire

This will result in a net decrease of \$141,480.60 in the expenditures and other financial use to the County's annual budget. To provide the additional revenue for the above, the following revenues will increase. These revenues have already been received or are verified they will be received in this fiscal year.

Account Number	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	CURRENT BUDGETED AMOUNT	INCREASE (DECREASE)	AS AMENDED
	Service District Fund			
209.3991.000	Fund Balance	\$ 371,429.29	\$ 141,480.60	\$ 512,909.89
	TOTALS	\$ 371,429.29	\$ 141,480.60	\$ 512,909.89

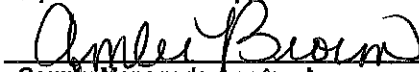
SECTION 2. Copies of this amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk of the Board of Commissioners, Budget Officer and to the Finance Director.

Adopted this 12th day of February, 2024.

Verified by the Clerk of the Board



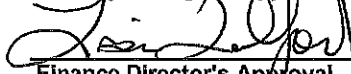
Department Head's Approval



Date

2/9/24

County Manager's Approval



Date

2/9/24

Finance Director's Approval

Date





## LOAN PAYOFF STATEMENT

Date: 01/18/2024

First Citizens Bank  
email

Attn:

This letter serves as the Loan Payoff Statement you requested regarding the following loan:

Loan No: 00910001386261

Borrower(s): THE PINNACLE VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE

Property Address/Description (if loan is secured by real estate):

Estimated Payoff Amount: As set forth below, the estimated payoff amount for the loan if received by 4:00 p.m. EST (if by wire, U.S. mail or courier) or by close of business local time (if in-person at a branch) on 02/18/2024 ("Projected Payoff Date") is \$ 141,480.60 ("Estimated Payoff Amount").

Principal:	\$
Interest:	\$
Prepayment Penalty:	\$
Late Charges:	\$
Loan Expenses:	\$
Other (Specify):	\$
Total:	\$

The current interest rate is \_\_\_\_\_%, the current per diem charge for interest is \$ 12.7379337.

The Estimated Payoff Amount is based on the outstanding principal balance of the loan at the close of business on the business day preceding the date of this letter, plus interest at the current interest rate that we anticipate will accrue to the account by the Projected Payoff Date. Accordingly, the Estimated Payoff Amount will not include subsequent transactions or activity on the loan account, including, but not limited to, payments, additional advances, changes in the interest rate, late charges, returns, and other amounts properly chargeable to the loan account. If the Estimated Payment Amount is paid on the Projected Payoff Date and there have been no transactions or activity on the loan account subsequent to this Loan Payoff Statement, such Estimated Payoff Amount will be sufficient to fully pay off the loan ("Final Payment Amount").

Upon receipt of the Final Payoff Amount, we will timely cancel all liens evidenced by the related security instruments including, but not limited to, UCC financing statements, titles and mortgages/deeds of trust in accordance with state law. Please note that if any liens securing the loan also secure other loans or obligations with us, we are not obligated to release such liens, unless and until all loans and obligations secured by such liens are paid in full and satisfied.

**Verifying/Updating Estimated Payoff Amount for North Carolina Real Estate Loans.** The Estimated Payoff Amount is only an estimate. To obtain a binding Final Payoff Amount in North Carolina, you may request a "Loan Payoff Update" from us on the Projected Payoff Date by 12:00 p.m. EST or on the preceding business day by completing the attached "Request for Loan Payoff Update" returning it to us by fax (1-866-299-3371), e-mail ([LoanPayoffRequest@firstcitizens.com](mailto:LoanPayoffRequest@firstcitizens.com)), or to a local branch. We will respond with a Final Payoff Amount that will be binding on us until the Projected Payoff Date. There is no charge for a Loan Payoff Update. If we receive the Final Payoff Amount stated in the Loan Payoff Update by the Projected Payoff Date, we will (subject to the special requirements for revolving lines of credit discussed below) cancel all liens evidenced by the related security instrument(s), including but not limited to UCC financing statements, and mortgages/deeds of trust in accordance with state law even if we incorrectly calculated the Final Payoff Amount. However, persons liable for payment of the loan will continue to be obligated until the loan is paid in full.

**Payment.** We require that payment be made in U.S. dollars in cash, check, or wired funds to be received by us in-person at a branch, by mail or courier or by wire transfer to our central wire room, as applicable. If payment is made by check, we will provisionally credit the loan account, but we reserve the absolute right to reverse the credit if the check is dishonored or if the check is not fully and finally paid in collected funds within ten (10) days. We credit (or provisionally credit) payments to loan accounts as of the business day they are received. Specifically, payments made (i) in-person at a branch received after 4:00 p.m. local time, (ii) by wire transfer received after 4:00 p.m. EST and (iii) by U.S. mail or courier received after 4:00 p.m. EST, in each case, on any business day will not be credited (or provisionally credited) to the loan account until the next business day and may be insufficient to pay the loan in full. Please indicate the loan account to which the payment should be credited, and provide written instructions directing the cancellation and disposition of the related security instrument(s) and other loan documents.

**Instructions to Terminate Line of Credit (if applicable).** In the case of a revolving line of credit, please also provide written instructions from the borrower(s) or an attorney acting on behalf of the borrower(s) to terminate the line of credit. In the absence of such instructions, we will *not* terminate a revolving credit account or cancel the related security instrument(s), even if the account balance is reduced to zero.

The Estimated Payoff Amount and related instructions should be sent to the following:

U.S. Mail:

First Citizens Bank  
Central Loan Operations (Payoff)-DAC20  
P.O. Box 26592  
Raleigh, NC 27611

UPS/FedEx or other courier:

First Citizens Bank  
Central Loan Operations (Payoff)-DAC20  
100 East Tryon Road  
Raleigh, NC 27603

Wire Transfer:

- Name of Bank/Account: First Citizens Bank
- Location: Raleigh, NC
- Account Number:
- ABA Number:
- Loan Number:
- Customer Name:

If you have questions concerning this letter, please contact First Citizens Direct at (888) 323-4732.

Sincerely,

Central Loan Servicing

**REQUEST FOR FINAL LOAN PAYOFF**  
**(For NC Real Estate Loans)**

Instructions: This form may be used to request a final binding payoff amount for a loan secured by real estate in North Carolina if you have previously requested a Loan Payoff Statement. Upon completion, please sign and fax to (866) 299-3371, e-mail to [LoanPayoffRequest@firstcitizens.com](mailto:LoanPayoffRequest@firstcitizens.com), bring into a local branch or mail to First Citizens Bank, Central Loan Operations (Payoff Request) - DAC20, PO Box 26592, Raleigh, NC 27611. This completed form must be received by First Citizens prior to 12:00 p.m. EST on the Projected Payoff Date or on the preceding business day.

I have previously obtained a Loan Payoff Statement from First Citizens Bank in connection with the following loan:

Loan No: 00910001386261

Borrower(s): THE PINNACLE VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCU

Property Description/Location:

The "Projected Payoff Date" is 02/18/2024. Please provide me with the Final Payoff Amount that will be valid until 4:00 p.m. EST on the Projected Payoff Date.

Please send your reply to me at the following fax number: \_\_\_\_\_

Or e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**REQUESTING PARTY  
(INDIVIDUAL):**

**REQUESTING PARTY  
(BUSINESS ENTITY):**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Name of Business*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Print or Type Name*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Telephone No.*

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Print Name and Title*

## STOKES COUNTY-BUDGET AMENDMENT

BE IT ORDAINED by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners that the following amendment be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024.

Section 1. To amend the General Fund, the expenditures are to be changed as follows:

Account Number	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	CURRENT BUDGETED AMOUNT	INCREASE (DECREASE)	AS AMENDED
	General Fund Insurance			
100.4122.450	Insurance Property, Liability, and Worker's Comp.	\$ 804,100.00	\$ 47,750.00	\$ 851,850.00
100.4122.451	Insurance HRA Account	\$ 175,000.00	\$ (47,750.00)	\$ 127,250.00
	Total	\$ 979,100.00	\$ -	\$ 979,100.00

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

To transfer funds for the difference between estimated and actual Workers' Comp. Insurance  
To transfer funds for the costs of deductibles for Public Officials Liability

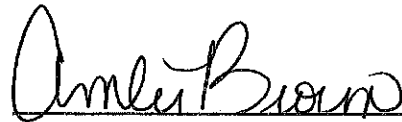
This will result in a net increase of \$0.00 in the expenditures and other financial use to the County's annual budget. To provide the additional revenue for the above, the following revenues will increase. These revenues have already been received or are verified they will be received in this fiscal year.

Account Number	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	CURRENT BUDGETED AMOUNT	INCREASE (DECREASE)	AS AMENDED

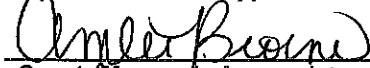
SECTION 2. Copies of this amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk of the Board of Commissioners, Budget Officer and to the Finance Director.

Adopted this 12th day of February, 2024.

Verified by the Clerk of the Board



Department Head's Approval



Date

2/9/24

County Manager's Approval



Date

2/9/24

Finance Director's Approval

Date



*Stokes County*

*Finance Department*

P.O. Box 20

Danbury, NC 27016

Email: [llankford@co.stokes.nc.us](mailto:llankford@co.stokes.nc.us)

(336) 593-2451

(336) 593-2346 Fax

February 9, 2024

Memorandum

Re: Workers' Comp and Public Officials Liability Insurance

Attached is Budget Amendment #47 in the amount of \$47,750.00. The amount budgeted in this line item for FY 23-24 was an estimate only for Workers' Compensation until audited onsite by Wilkinson Insurance Services. Audited numbers received were higher than the estimate and must be paid. Funds must also be allocated for Public Officials Liability declarations. These are claims that are paid on an as needed basis.

If you need additional information, please let me know.

Lisa Lankford

## AUDITED PAYROLL SCHEDULE

Participant <b>Stokes County</b>							
Contract Number <b>WC-ST-084-22</b>						Prepared: 0109/24	
Contract period <b>JULY 1, 2022 TO JULY 1, 2023</b>							
<b>Class Code</b>	<b>Description (Abbreviated)</b>	<b>Final Modified Rate</b>	<b>Estimated Remuneration</b>	<b>Estimated Contribution</b>	<b>Audited Remuneration</b>	<b>Audited Contribution</b>	<b>Additional (Return) Contribution</b>
6217	EXCAVATION & DRIVERS	6.612	\$71,012	\$4,695	\$0	\$0	(\$4,695)
7380	LIMOUSINE CO AOE & DRIVERS	6.062	\$68,809	\$4,171	\$0	\$0	(\$4,171)
7705	AMBULANCE & E.M.T./E.M.S.	5.286	\$2,388,562	\$126,257	\$2,653,714	\$140,273	\$14,016
7710	FIREFIGHTERS & DRIVERS PATROL OR PROTECTIVE CORPS	4.001	\$166,829	\$6,674	\$174,560	\$6,984	\$309
7720	SHERIFF'S DEPT. OFFICERS & DRIVERS	3.823	\$3,981,511	\$152,217	\$4,235,880	\$161,941	\$9,725
8380	AUTO SERVICE OR REPAIR CENTERS & DRIVERS	3.419	\$93,019	\$3,180	\$100,391	\$3,432	\$252
8810	CLERICAL	0.339	\$3,247,829	\$11,018	\$3,368,075	\$11,425	\$408
8810x	CLERICAL -DSS - N/A	0.339	\$1,449,288	\$4,916	\$1,519,611	\$5,155	\$239
8810y	CLERICAL - HEALTH DEPT. - N/A	0.339	\$93,405	\$317	\$0	\$0	(\$317)
8831	HOSPITAL VETERINARY & DRIVERS	1.488	\$151,925	\$2,260	\$82,966	\$1,234	(\$1,026)
8832	PHYSICIAN	0.420	\$1,201,261	\$5,051	\$1,123,935	\$4,726	(\$325)
9015	BUILDINGS - NOC	4.332	\$514,848	\$22,303	\$653,376	\$28,304	\$6,001
9063	YMCA, YWCA - ALL EMPLOYEES AND CLERICAL	0.954	\$136,834	\$1,305	\$205,821	\$1,963	\$658
9102	PARK NOC ALL EMPLOYEES/DRIVERS	2.651	\$6,638	\$176	\$20,947	\$555	\$379
9403	ASHES GARBAGE OR REFUSE COLLECTION & DRIVERS	8.915	\$136,200	\$12,142	\$578,993	\$51,615	\$39,474
9410	MUNICIPAL TOWNSHIP COUNTY OR STATE EMPLOYEES NOC	2.223	\$1,183,400	\$26,301	\$1,390,655	\$30,907	\$4,606
9410x	MUNICIPAL TOWNSHIP COUNTY OR STATE EMPLOYEES NOC - DSS	2.223	\$1,412,598	\$31,395	\$1,720,897	\$38,247	\$6,852
9410y	MUNICIPAL TOWNSHIP COUNTY OR STATE EMPLOYEES NOC	2.223	\$16,906	\$376	\$0	\$0	(\$376)
9999	VOLUNTEERS (NCACC designated class)	38.287	\$1,602	\$613	\$1,803	\$690	\$77
8810s	CLERICAL-SUBCONTRACTORS	0.339	\$0	\$0	\$63,397	\$215	\$215
9410	MUNICIPAL TOWNSHIP COUNTY OR STATE EMPLOYEES NOC-SUBCONTRACTORS	2.223	\$0	\$0	\$16,563	\$368	\$368
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$16,322,477</b>	<b>\$415,367</b>	<b>\$17,911,584</b>	<b>\$488,036</b>	<b>\$72,668</b>

Experience Mod Adjust.

Size of Contrib.Factor	0.886
Safety Factor Adjust.	0.975

additional or (return) contrib.	\$72,668
---------------------------------	----------

**NCACC RISK MANAGEMENT POOLS - LIABILITY AND PROPERTY**

**SECTION V  
PUBLIC OFFICIALS LIABILITY  
CONTRACT DECLARATIONS**

Participant **Stokes County**

Contract Number **LP-ST-084-23**

Contract Period **July 1, 2023 to July 1, 2024**

Effective Time **12:01 A.M., Eastern Daylight Time**

**THIS COVERAGE IS WRITTEN ON A CLAIMS MADE BASIS**

SCHEDULE OF COVERAGES AND LIMITS		
COVERAGE	LIMIT	
Coverage Agreement A	Per Public Officials Wrongful Act	Public Officials Wrongful Act Aggregate
	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000
Coverage Agreement B	Sexual Misconduct, Each Person	Sexual Misconduct Aggregate
	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000
Coverage Agreement C (Scheduled Unmanned Aircraft)	Per Public Officials Wrongful Act	Public Officials Wrongful Act Aggregate
	\$2,000,000	\$4,000,000
Coverage Agreement C (Unscheduled Unmanned Aircraft)	Per Public Officials Wrongful Act	Public Officials Wrongful Act Aggregate
	\$250,000	\$500,000

DEDUCTIBLE	
Coverage Agreement A (per Public Officials Wrongful Act)	\$5,000
Coverage Agreement B (Sexual Misconduct, each person)	\$5,000
Coverage Agreement C (per Public Officials Wrongful Act)	\$5,000

**RETROACTIVE DATE: (Aggregate 6 mil)**  
**RETROACTIVE DATE: (Aggregate 6 mil to 4 mil)**

7/1/2022
7/1/2023





**Board of County Commissioners  
February 12, 2024  
6:00 PM**

**Item number: VI.c.**

**Tax Office Items for Approval**

Contact: Richard Brim, Tax Administrator

Summary:

**Items for Approval on February 12, 2024.**

1. Real and Personal Refunds more than \$100.00.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Tax Office Agenda	1/17/2024	Cover Memo

# TAX COLLECTION STATUS REPORT

AS OF JANUARY 5, 2024

TOTAL AMOUNT COLLECTED BY MONTH FY 2023-2024

CURRENT 2023 TAX	COUNTY	SCHOOL OPERATING EXP	USE VALUE TAX BILLS	INTEREST PEN & FEES	OCCUPANCY TAX	KING (FIRE)	RURAL HALL (FIRE)	WALNUT COVE (FIRE)	SERVICE (FIRE)	CITY OF KING	TOWN OF WALNUT COVE	DANBURY	EDU DEBT BLDG FUND
JULY	163,536.56	146,939.74	7,795.98	1,352.98	-	6,519.48	1,548.96	2,485.96	23,355.97	32,094.14	9,091.38	359.96	20,674.21
AUGUST	7,426,240.95	6,671,510.70	4,972.46	1,017.60	-	272,986.91	47,808.32	166,790.42	915,413.80	2,112,037.16	287,954.25	18,529.35	909,912.35
SEPTEMBER	477,054.28	427,148.89	6,944.25	1,591.62	-	17,273.15	3,300.99	8,792.80	60,638.08	134,042.45	25,560.60	554.80	58,952.92
OCTOBER	327,298.11	294,071.97	2,774.03	611.46	-	6,641.44	1,112.28	7,723.88	39,063.05	47,519.79	89,064.98	541.21	40,306.95
NOVEMBER	336,484.51	302,332.55	1,120.87	243.13	-	9,929.63	2,104.92	9,426.86	45,529.58	79,153.88	10,216.04	1,478.86	41,297.29
DECEMBER	1,164,408.95	1,046,128.09	7,628.43	1,203.14	-	31,486.89	7,430.82	36,533.80	143,734.16	322,550.05	60,713.91	3,914.45	143,181.09
JANUARY	3,416,630.25	3,069,493.82	-	143.84	-	32,267.36	6,754.62	27,783.84	729,275.66	169,616.16	59,828.73	3,674.01	418,467.89
FEBRUARY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MARCH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
APRIL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MAY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
JUNE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SUB TOTAL	\$13,311,653.61	\$11,957,625.76	CONT'D	CONT'D		\$377,104.86	\$70,060.91	\$259,537.56	\$1,957,010.30	\$2,897,013.63	\$542,429.89	\$29,052.64	CONT'D
BUDGET AMT	\$14,121,812.00	\$12,686,282.00	CONT'D	CONT'D		\$398,586.00	\$79,404.00	\$283,977.00	\$2,073,099.00				CONT'D
BALANCE	\$810,158.39	\$728,656.24				\$21,481.14	\$9,343.09	\$24,439.44	\$116,088.70				
PERCENTAGE	94.26%	94.26%				94.61%	88.23%	91.39%	94.40%				
PRIOR	COUNTY	SCHOOL OPERATING EXP	USE VALUE TAX BILLS	INTEREST PEN & FEES	DOGS	KING (FIRE)	RURAL HALL (FIRE)	WALNUT COVE (FIRE)	SERVICE (FIRE)	CITY OF KING	TOWN OF WALNUT COVE	TOWN OF DANBURY	EDU DEBT BLDG FUND
JULY	35,114.97	31,777.22	-	12,255.40	24.00	1,758.29	106.91	622.74	5,225.37	3,981.01	629.05	31.91	4,687.92
AUGUST	26,104.41	22,804.82	-	10,256.66	3.36	545.75	138.25	1,002.02	3,900.51	2,728.07	(413.52)	-	3,529.53
SEPTEMBER	18,399.57	17,164.18	-	7,414.39	42.00	735.91	72.59	548.38	2,621.22	3,000.97	848.35	-	2,612.70
OCTOBER	14,769.76	13,440.85	-	6,559.63	30.00	214.07	90.40	503.52	2,172.29	3,739.42	337.75	-	2,061.50
NOVEMBER	21,049.79	18,871.88	-	10,014.34	5.91	633.16	244.73	342.49	2,270.21	9,376.44	1,510.38	-	2,968.89
DECEMBER	12,900.72	11,683.21	-	5,672.69	-	68.38	9.42	416.25	1,962.07	3,718.87	974.96	85.55	1,827.20
JANUARY	6,942.81	6,942.81	-	1,771.50	-	32.72	-	26.10	1,457.91	998.95	607.13	8.60	974.63
FEBRUARY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MARCH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
APRIL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MAY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
JUNE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SUB TOTAL	\$135,282.03	\$122,684.97	\$31,236.02	\$60,108.38	\$105.27	\$3,988.28	\$662.30	\$3,461.50	\$19,609.58	\$27,543.73	\$4,494.10	\$126.06	\$1,651,455.07
BUDGET AMT	\$300,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$225,000.00	\$250.00	\$5,500.00	\$2,000.00	\$7,000.00	\$42,000.00				\$1,729,554.00
BALANCE	\$164,717.97	\$77,315.03	\$(1,236.02)	\$164,891.62	\$144.73	\$1,511.72	\$1,337.70	\$3,538.50	\$22,390.42				\$(78,098.93)
PERCENTAGE	45.09%	61.34%	104.12%	26.71%	42.11%	72.51%	33.12%	49.45%	46.69%				95.48%

# STOKES COUNTY TAX ADMINISTRATION RELEASE REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2023

## REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY RELEASES LESS THAN \$100 PER NCGS 105-381(b)

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
GILLET, CHRISTOPHER WAYNE	1010 GORDON HOME RD, PINNACLE, NC 27043	4153-2023-2023	\$68.26
HENCLEY, RONITA J HENCLEY, KENDALL E	2018 EAST RD, WALNUT COVE, NC 27052	5617-2023-2023-0001	\$88.01
WARNER, HUNTER RAYNE	889 E KING ST, KING, NC 27021	880771-2023-2023	\$65.61

Richard T. Brim  
RICHARD T. BRIM  
TAX ADMINISTRATOR

1/17/24  
DATE

TOTAL AMOUNT \$221.88

# STOKES COUNTY TAX ADMINISTRATION REFUND REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2023

## REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY REFUNDS LESS THAN \$100 PER NCGS 105-381(b)

NAME	ADDRESS	BILL NUMBER	LEDGER	AMOUNT
** BOURNE, WILLARD THOMAS	1065 REST RD, GERMANTON, NC 27019	850467-2023-2023-0001	100.3100.160	\$3.01
			208.3100.160	\$0.74
			211.3100.160	\$0.37
			112.3100.160	\$2.96
			100.3839.012	\$0.42
<p>** <u>ATTN FINANCE</u>: PLEASE DIRECT WILLARD THOMAS BOURNE REFUND MONIES            (TOTAL AMOUNT \$7.50) AS PAYABLE TO STOKES COUNTY TAX COLLECTIONS            AS A PRE-PAYMENT TO BE APPLIED TOWARD FUTURE ANNUAL TAX BILL            # 850467-2024-2024 PER B.O.C.C. RESOLUTION 105-321(G)</p>				
LANDAVERDE-HERNANDEZ, ESTRELLA	3375 NC 704 HWY E, LAWSONVILLE, NC 27022	864905-2023-2023	100.3100.160	\$1.60
			209.3100.160	\$0.39
			211.3100.160	\$0.20
			112.3100.160	\$1.44
LANDAVERDE-HERNANDEZ, ESTRELLA	3375 NC 704 HWY E, LAWSONVILLE, NC 27022	874082-2023-2023	100.3100.160	\$8.83
			209.3100.160	\$2.17
			211.3100.160	\$1.08
			112.3100.160	\$7.94

TOTAL AMOUNT \$31.15

Richard T. Brim  
 RICHARD T. BRIM  
 TAX ADMINISTRATOR

1/17/24  
 DATE

Lisa Lankford  
 LISA LANKFORD  
 FINANCE DIRECTOR

1/17/2024  
 DATE

# STOKES COUNTY TAX ADMINISTRATION REFUND REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2023

## REAL AND PERSONAL PROPERTY REFUNDS MORE THAN \$100 PER NCGS 105-381(b)

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>BILL NUMBER</u>	<u>LEDGER</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>REASON</u>
ANDERSON, ROBERT POINDEXTER ANDERSON, MELISSA HOWELL	201 MOUNTAIN MAPLE DR, KING, NC 27021	69552233	100.3100.113 601.4110.444 211.3100.001 112.3100.001	\$30.02 \$45.51 \$3.87 \$30.02	VEHICLE SOLD
MARTIN, STACIE ELIZABETH	1115 OLD 704 LOOP, LAWSONVILLE, NC 27022	68193132	100.3100.113 209.3100.112 211.3100.001 112.3100.001	\$76.54 \$19.75 \$9.87 \$76.54	VEHICLE SOLD
NORMAN, LINDA LASH NORMAN, PAUL WESLEY	PO BOX 2603, KING, NC 27021	47757069	100.3100.113 601.4110.444 211.3100.001 112.3100.001	\$30.45 \$46.17 \$3.93 \$30.45	VEHICLE SOLD

<u>TOTAL AMOUNT</u>	<u>\$403.12</u>
---------------------	-----------------

Richard T. Brim  
RICHARD T. BRIM  
TAX ADMINISTRATOR

1/17/24  
DATE

BRAD CHANDLER  
CHAIRMAN-STOKES COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

DATE



# COUNTY OF STOKES

**Richard T. Brim**  
Tax Administrator



Phone (336) 593-2811

**TAX ADMINISTRATION**

Fax (336) 593-4019

Post Office Box 294 • 1014 Main Street • Government Center • Danbury, NC 27016

**Date: January 17, 2024**

**To: Board of County Commissioners**

**From: Richard T. Brim, Tax Administrator**

**Reference: Discovery and Garnishment Report**

## **Tax Administration Report - (Fiscal Year 2023/2024)**

Discoveries	Audit Dates	# of Accounts	Total Value	Taxes Due
Business and Personal Property Discovery Report for Quarter*	10/1/23 - 12/31/23	145	\$1,181,098	\$15,185.46
Total Business and Personal Discoveries Billed for FY*	7/1/23- 6/30/24	245	\$2,726,605	\$32,295.52

**\*Report to the Board in accordance with GS 105-312(b)**

Garnishments**	Dates	Total Accounts	Original Levy Amount	Collected Amount
Total Amount Collected for Quarter	10/1/23 - 12/31/23	182	\$41,368.88	\$29,348.01
Total Amount Collected for FY	7/1/23 6/30/24	347	\$118,868.23	\$80,731.54

**\*\*Detailed report can be submitted upon request by Board**

Sincerely,



Richard T. Brim  
Tax Administrator

1/17/24  
Date

# COUNTY OF STOKES

Richard T. Brim  
TAX ADMINISTRATOR  
Cheryl C. Hill  
ASSISTANT TAX COLLECTOR



Shellie Booe  
EMS/DEPUTY TAX COLLECTOR  
Lisa Beasley  
EMS/DEPUTY TAX COLLECTOR

Phone (336) 593-2425

TAX ADMINISTRATION

Fax (336) 593-4015

Post Office Box 57 • 1014 Main Street • Administration Building • Danbury, NC 27016

January 2024

To: Stokes County Board of Commissioners

From: Richard T. Brim, Tax Administrator

Re: EMS Billing & Collections

The following report to the Stokes County Board of Commissioners shows the Stokes County Emergency Medical Services collections (current and delinquent) for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. This report provides each month's activities including number of transports billed, amount charged, amount collected and amount of contractual obligations.

## Current and Delinquent EMS Billings

	TRANSPORTS BILLED	TOTAL CHARGES	TOTAL PAID CURRENT	TOTAL PAID PRIOR	MEDICARE/MEDICAID NON-BILLABLE	OTHER NON- BILLABLE
JULY, 2023	282	\$221,479.20	\$176,647.05	\$6,934.54	\$56,603.00	\$1,846.98
AUGUST, 2023	396	\$305,765.40	\$188,374.31	\$16,403.03	\$69,842.57	\$13,949.45
SEPTEMBER, 2023	600	\$470,779.80	\$172,626.35	\$13,554.73	\$60,842.30	\$738.06
OCTOBER, 2023	560	\$355,448.20	\$264,011.35	\$13,482.35	\$84,830.39	\$1,002.48
NOVERMBER, 2023	274	\$222,530.60	\$185,511.04	\$16,760.53	\$97,975.21	\$3,705.47
DECEMBER, 2023	369	\$286,719.80	\$150,374.75	\$11,148.49	\$72,677.62	\$7,706.78
JANUARY, 2024						
FEBRUARY, 2024						
MARCH, 2024						
APRIL, 2024						
MAY, 2024						
JUNE, 2024						
TOTALS:	2,481	\$1,862,723.00	\$1,137,544.85	\$78,283.67	\$442,771.09	\$28,949.22

Richard T. Brim  
TAX ADMINISTRATOR



# COUNTY OF STOKES

**Richard T. Brim**  
Tax Administrator



Phone (336) 593-2811

**TAX ADMINISTRATION**

Fax (336) 593-4019

Post Office Box 294 • 1014 Main Street • Government Center • Danbury, NC 27016

**Date: January 17, 2024**

**To: Board of County Commissioners**

**From: Richard T. Brim, Tax Administrator**

**Reference: DataMax Collections Report**

DataMax (Interstate Collections)			
Vehicle Taxes	Oct	Nov	Dec
Month to Date Collected	\$0.00	\$35.14	\$135.16
Property Taxes	Oct	Nov	Dec
Month to Date Collected	\$0.00	\$1083.01	\$0.00
EMS	Oct	Nov	Dec
Month to Date Collected	\$1,470.02	\$1401.61	\$1505.37
Total Collected (October 2023 – December 2023)			
Vehicle Taxes	\$170.30		
Property Taxes	\$1,083.01		
EMS	\$4,377.00		
Grand Total	\$5,630.31		

Sincerely,

Richard T. Brim  
Richard T. Brim  
Tax Administrator

1/17/24  
Date





# COUNTY OF STOKES

## TAX ADMINISTRATION

Post Office Box 294 • 1014 Main Street • Administration Building • Danbury, NC 27016  
Phone (336) 593-2811 • Fax (336) 593-4019

**Date: January 17, 2024**

**To: Stokes County Board of Commissioners**

**From: Richard Brim, Tax Administrator**

**Reference: 2% Early Payment Discount Information**

**BOC:**

Stokes County currently offers an “Early Payment Discount” of 2% on annual tax bills if paid prior to September 1<sup>st</sup>. If the Board chooses to amend the discount percentage, it must be approved by May 1<sup>st</sup>. Stokes County typically collects around % of the budgeted amount of annual property taxes, excluding registered motor vehicles, during the discount period (July-August).

Below is a chart that illustrates the 2023 Annual Tax Bills for “Early Payment Discount”. The 2% Discount Amount shown below is the actual amount reported for Tax Year 2023. The other three columns (1.5%, 1.0% and 0.50%) are for reference and reflects what the discount amounts would be if the Board elects to amend the “Early Payment Discount Percentage”.

Tax District	2% Discount	1.5% Discount	1% Discount	0.50% Discount
County	\$159,189.11	\$119,391.83	\$79,594.56	\$39,797.28
School Operating Expense	\$143,008.51	\$107,256.38	\$71,504.26	\$35,752.13
Education Debt/Building Fund	\$19,496.06	\$14,622.04	\$9,748.03	\$4,874.02
Service Fire	\$19,617.82	\$14,713.37	\$9,808.91	\$4,904.45
King Fire	\$5,860.97	\$4,395.73	\$2,930.49	\$1,465.24
Walnut Cove Fire	\$3,528.61	\$2,646.46	\$1,764.31	\$882.15
Rural Hall Fire	\$1,031.91	\$773.93	\$515.96	\$257.98
City of King	\$45,304.76	\$33,978.57	\$22,652.38	\$11,326.19
Town of Walnut Cove	\$6,215.87	\$4,661.90	\$3,107.94	\$1,553.97
Town of Danbury	\$385.46	\$289.10	\$192.73	\$96.36
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$403,639.08</b>	<b>\$302,729.31</b>	<b>\$201,819.57</b>	<b>\$100,909.77</b>

If you need any additional information, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Brim".

Richard Brim



**Board of County Commissioners  
February 12, 2024  
6:00 PM**

**Item number: VII.a.**

**Cooperative Extension Director Introduction**

Contact:

Summary:

Matt Lenhardt has been selected by NC State as the new Cooperative Extension Director for Stokes County. He will be present to introduce himself to the Board of Commissioners and public.



**Board of County Commissioners  
February 12, 2024  
6:00 PM**

**Item number: VII.b.**

**Hanging Rock State Park Report**

Contact: Robin Riddlebarger, Hanging Rock State Park Superintendent

**Summary:**

Robin Riddlebarger, Park Superintendent for Hanging Rock State Park, will be at the meeting to present an update about the park for 2023.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Hanging Rock 2023 Report	2/23/2024	Cover Memo



## Hanging Rock State Park – State of the State Park 2023





2023 Visitation 904,880



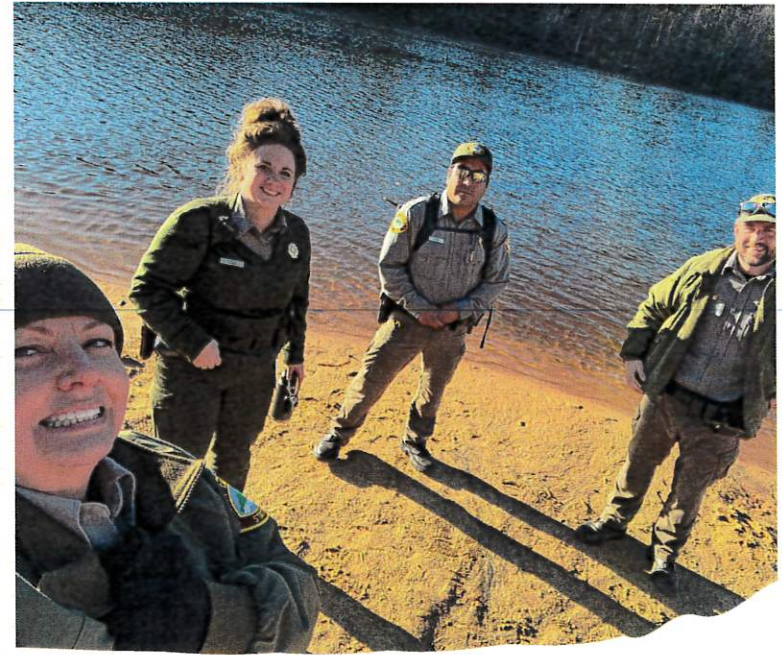


Staff delivered  
433 nature programs  
and hikes  
to 4395 people.

Lead interpretive  
rangers are  
Maggie Miller and  
Jacob Fields.







Staffing, all EMR, two  
vacancies, ten positions  
added in 2024





Park maintenance mechanics =  
miracle workers



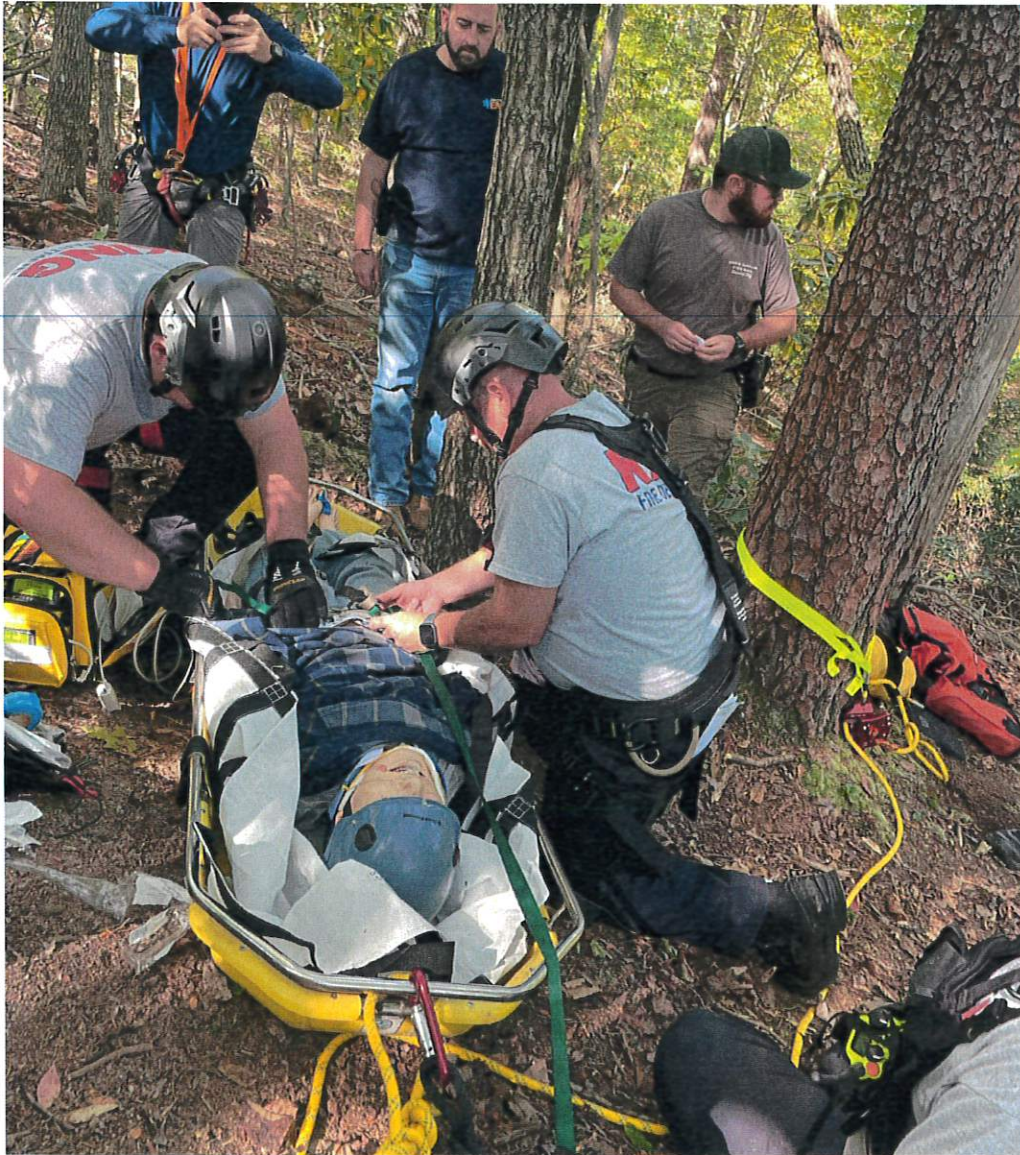
Swim  
lessons

Scholarship  
for  
lifeguard  
training.

We're  
hiring!







Training  
Stokes County EMS, 911 Dispatch,  
Danbury Volunteer Fire Department,  
Fire Marshall's Office, and King FD





Staff responded to 24 reportable medical calls.  
Thank you to DVFD, Sauratown, EMS, and our many  
partners! We could not do this without you!





- Staff responded to 38 law enforcement situations, 2 suicides, and 2 wildfires.





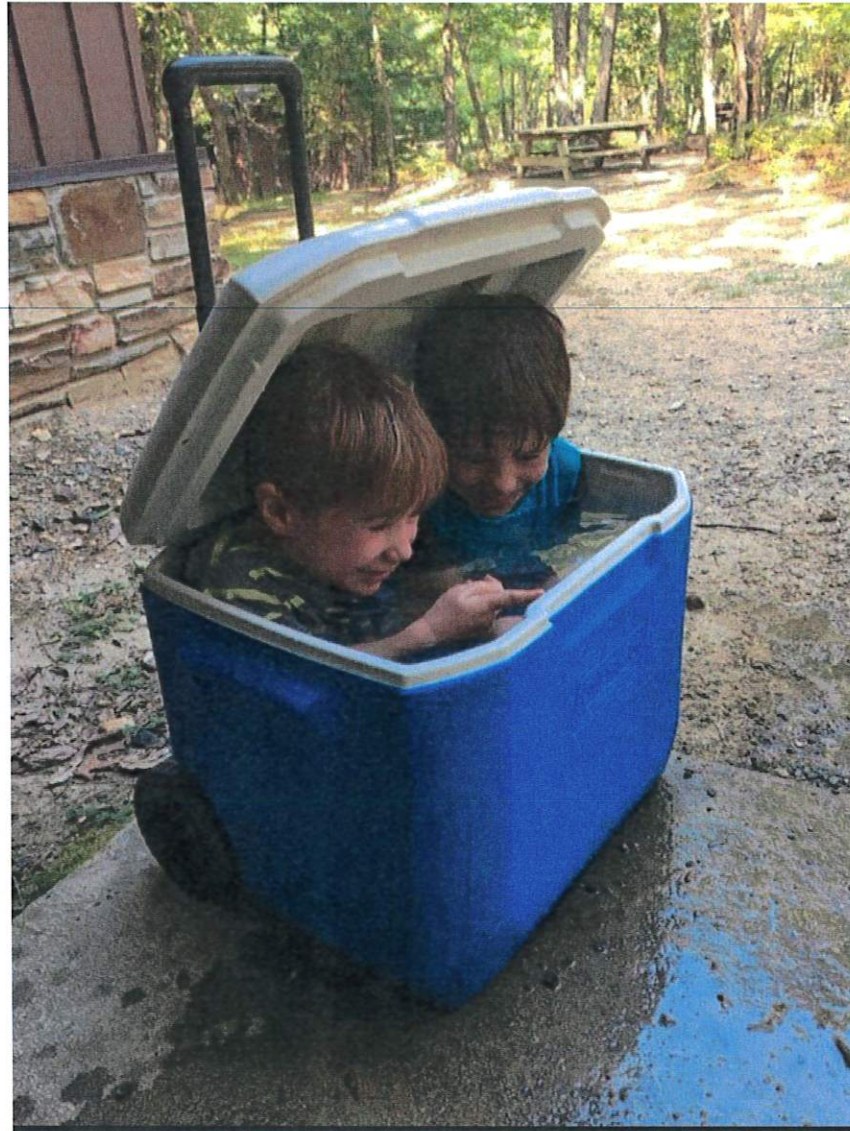
245 acres burned under prescription  
Lead natural Resources rangers are  
Jonathan Buie and Jacob Fields





Revenue: total  
\$728,452.91

Campsites \$206K  
Cabins \$179K  
Gift shop souvenirs \$131K  
Group camp \$16K  
Picnic shelters \$7K  
Permits \$3K  
Staff barracks rent \$962  
Gift cards \$872  
Donations \$500  
Auditorium rental \$106





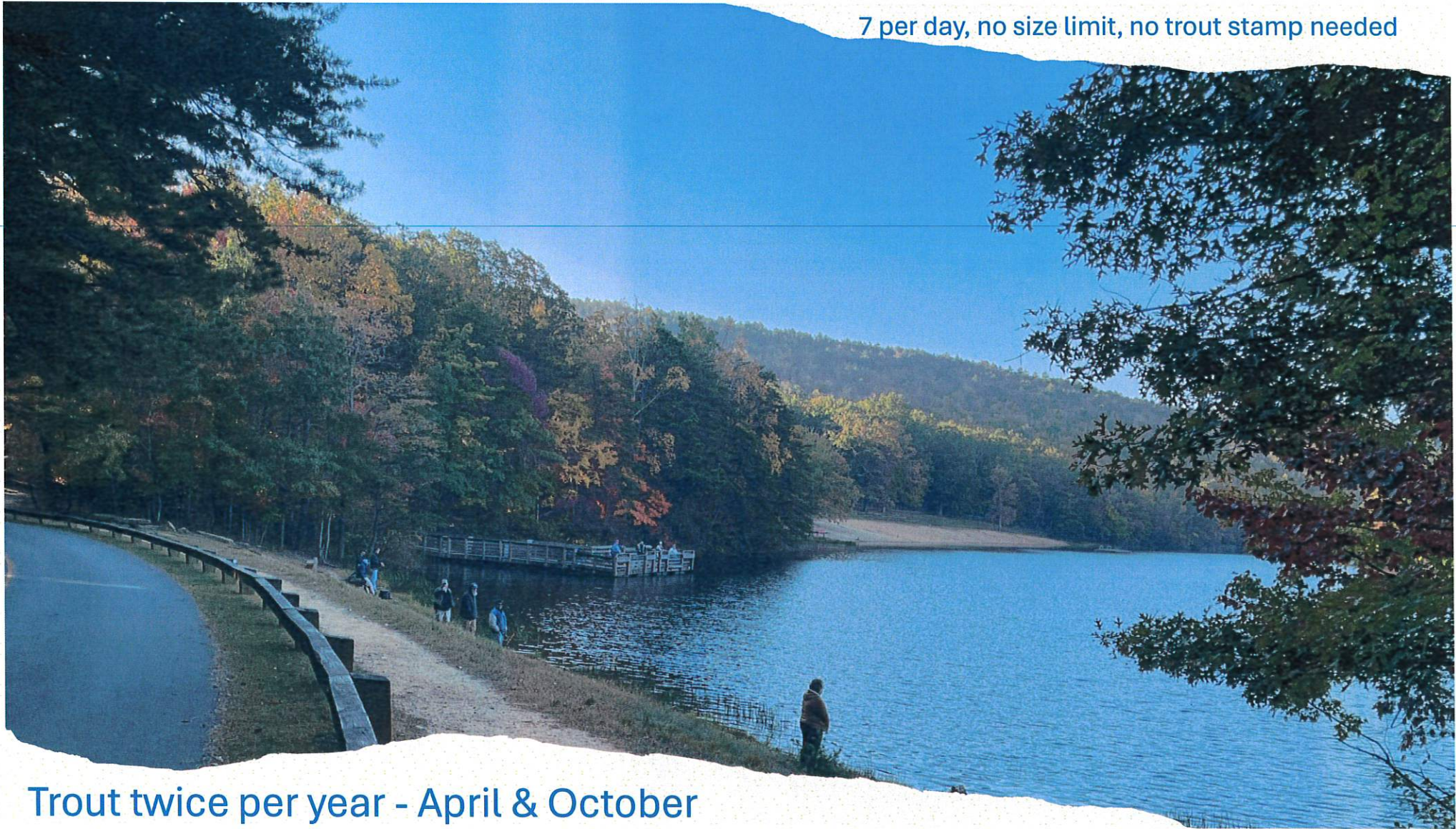


Revenue

\$97K swimming, \$24K Food, \$13K Boat rentals



7 per day, no size limit, no trout stamp needed




Trout twice per year - April & October





1 of 1

## Timber Rattlesnakes







Although a rare occurrence,  
Timber Rattlesnakes  
may be encountered in this park.

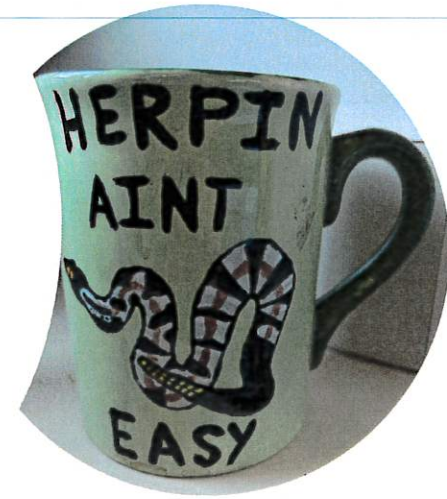
Rattlesnakes are venomous; however, they  
are timid and nonaggressive, posing no danger  
if you keep your distance and leave them alone.

The Timber Rattlesnake is a protected species.  
It is a criminal offense to disturb, capture or  
kill them in North Carolina.

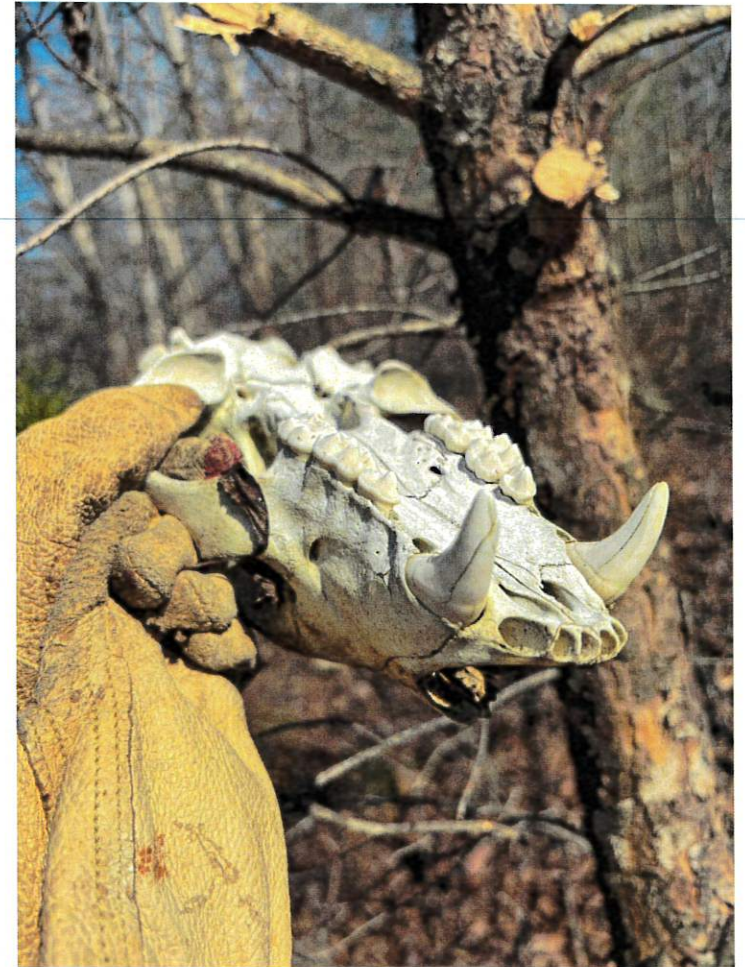
Stay on designated trails and leash pets at all times.

Report rattlesnake sightings with pictures to: [hangingrockncparks.gov](http://hangingrockncparks.gov)  
For more information access the QR code below.



Trumpeter swan  
photo by  
Alan Wiltsie

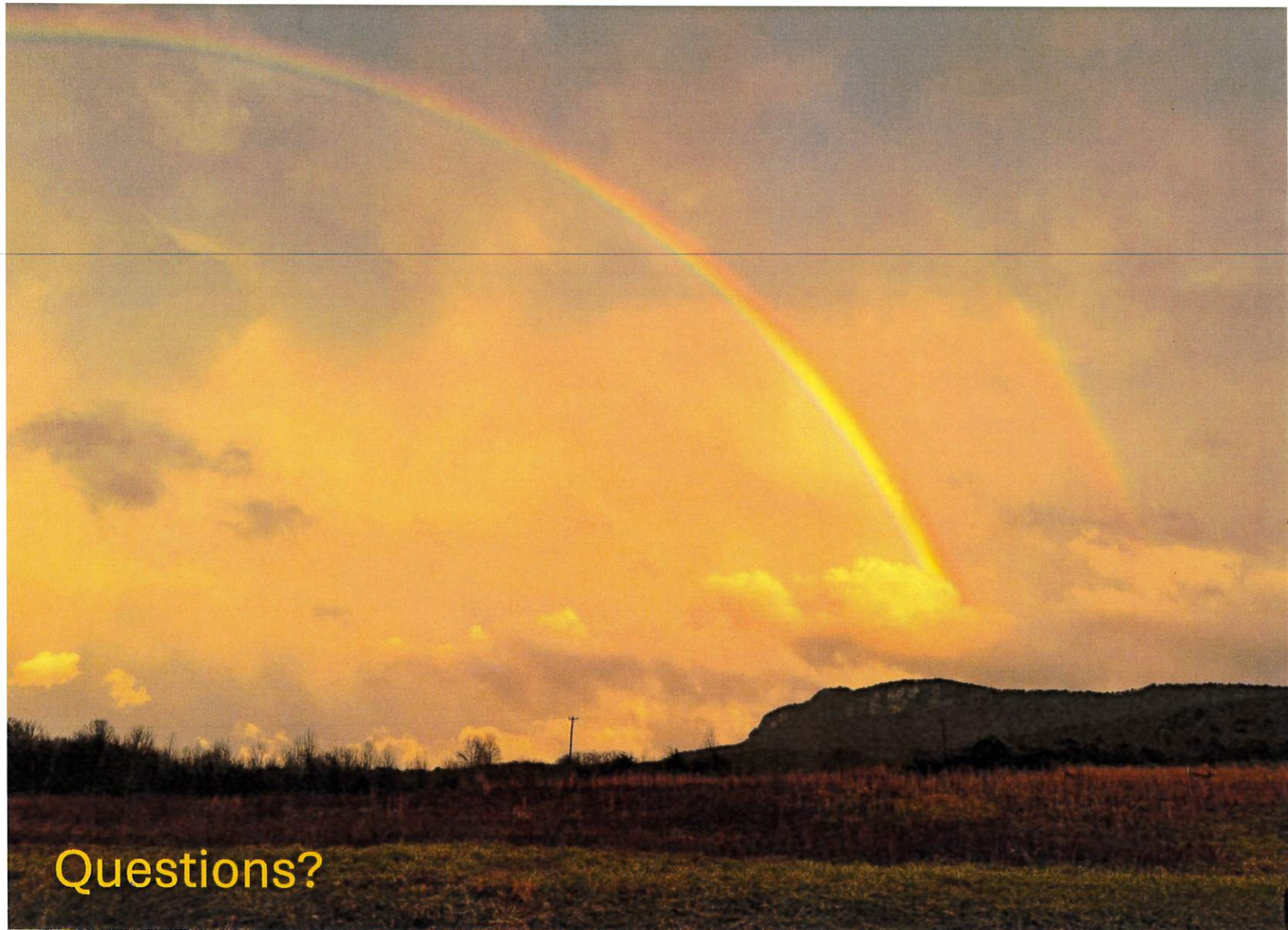






Project bid  
opening was in  
January. Work  
will likely take  
2 years.





Questions?



**Board of County Commissioners  
February 12, 2024  
6:00 PM**

**Item number: VII.c.**

**Presentation of the FY 22/23 Audit**

Contact: Lisa Lankford

**Summary:**

Kelly Gooderham with Martin Starnes and Associates will be here to present the Stokes County FY 22/23 audit. Attached is the presentation that will be presented at the Commissioners meeting on Monday, February 12, 2024.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Presentation of FY 22/23 Stokes County Audit	2/9/2024	Cover Memo



# Stokes County

2023 Audit Financial Statements



MARTIN ♦ STARNES  
& ASSOCIATES, CPAs, P.A.

A close-up photograph of a person wearing a white button-down shirt. Their right hand is pointing at the screen of a smartphone held in their left hand. The background is blurred.

# Audit Highlights

## ☐ UNMODIFIED OPINION



# STOKES COUNTY'S FUND BALANCE CLASSIFICATIONS

## Nonspendable fund balance:

Inventory	\$ 74,149
Leases	264

## Restricted fund balance:

Stabilization by State statute	3,585,010
All others	4,663,301
Assigned fund balance	4,318,941
Unassigned fund balance	<u>13,008,401</u>

Total General Fund fund balance	<u><u>\$ 25,650,066</u></u>
---------------------------------	-----------------------------



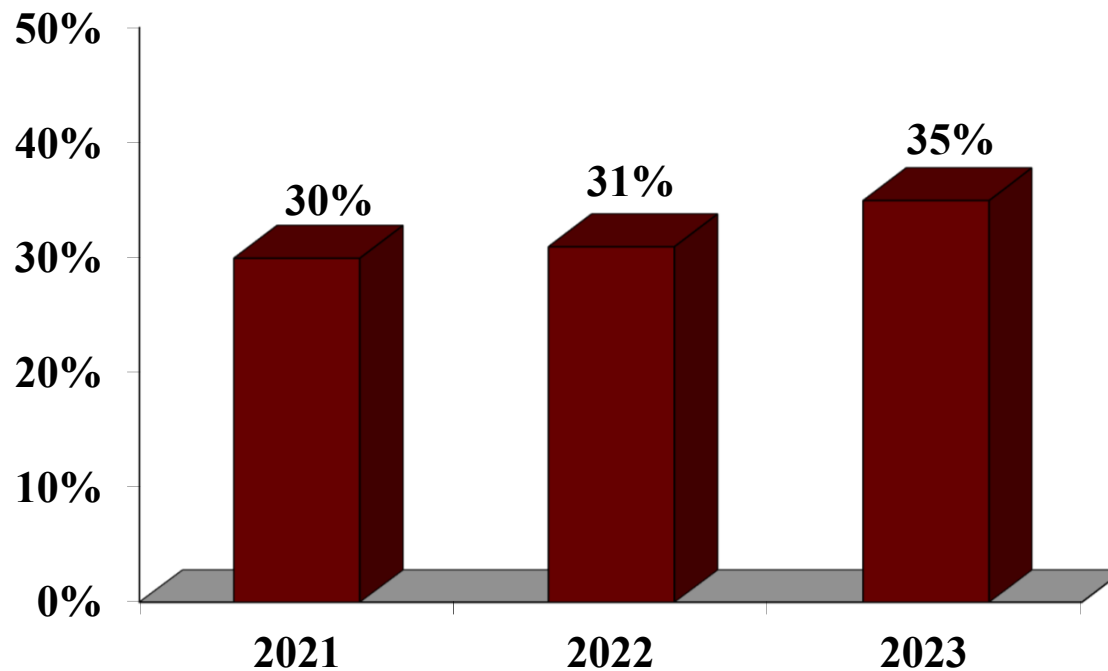


## FUND BALANCE POSITION – GENERAL FUND

Total Fund Balance	\$ 25,650,066
Non spendable:	
Inventory	\$ 74,149
Lease receivables	264
Stabilization by State Statute	<u>- 3,585,010</u>
Available Fund Balance 2023	\$ 21,990,643
Available Fund Balance 2022	\$ 17,548,287
Increase in Available FB	\$ 4,442,356

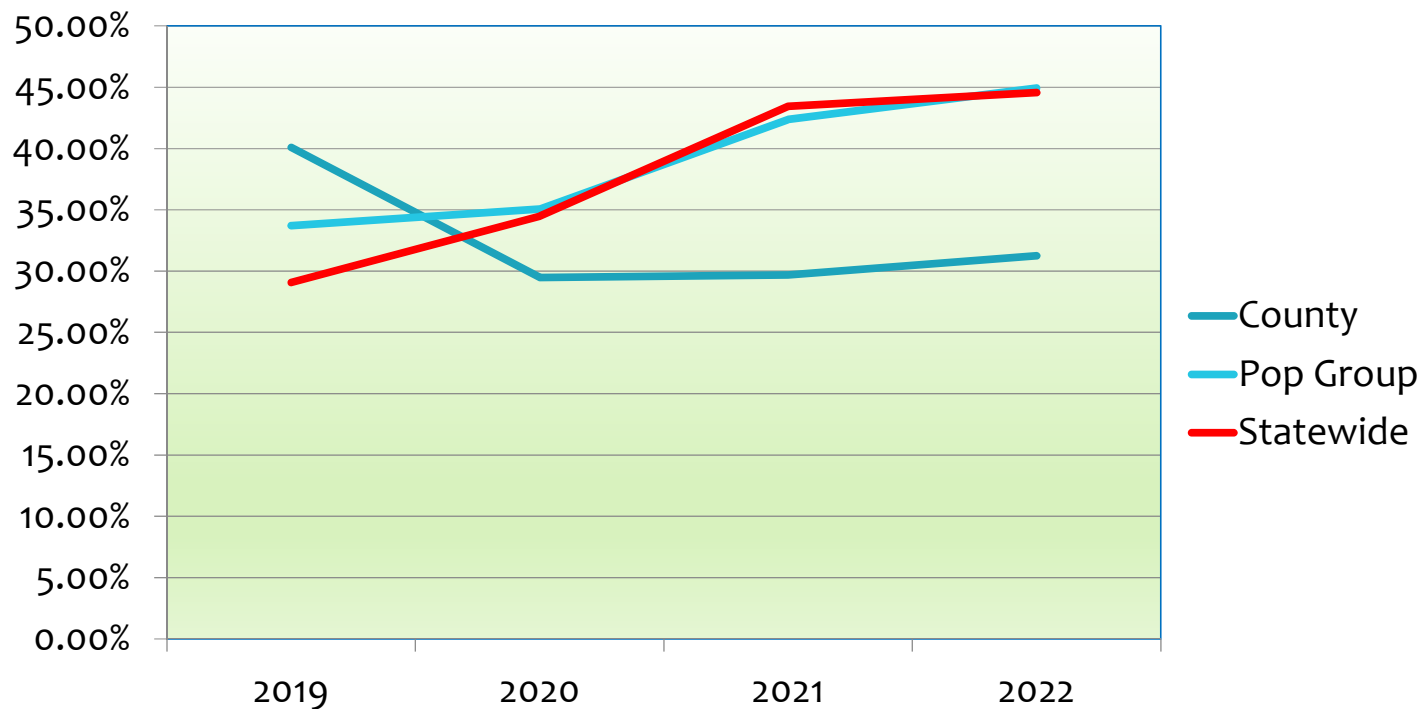


# AVAILABLE FUND BALANCE AS A PERCENTAGE OF EXPENDITURES, TRANSFERS OUT, AND DEBT PROCEEDS: GENERAL FUND



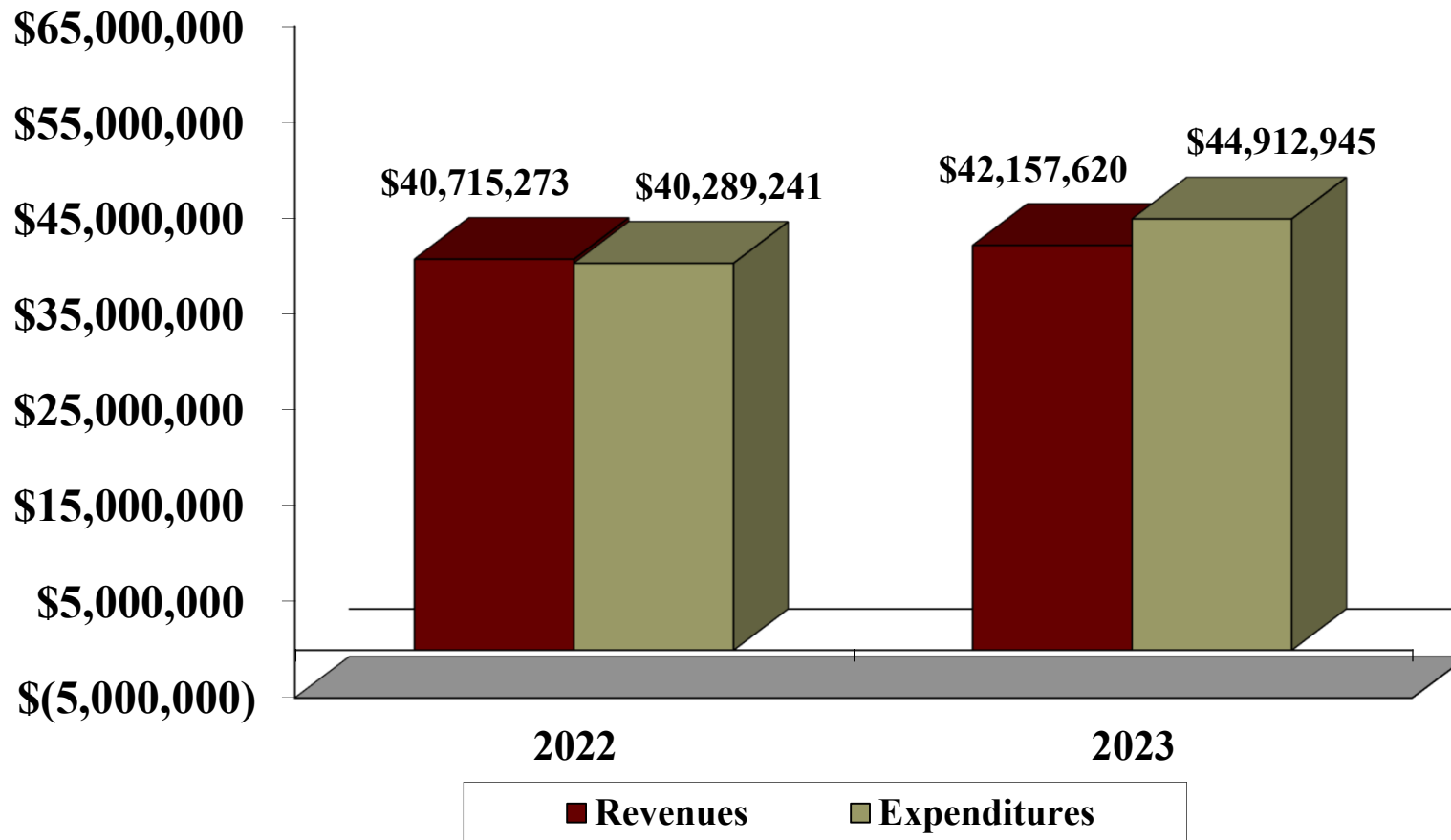
# COMPARISON OF STOKES COUNTY'S GENERAL FUND BALANCE

OBTAINED FROM THE STATE TREASURER'S WEBSITE

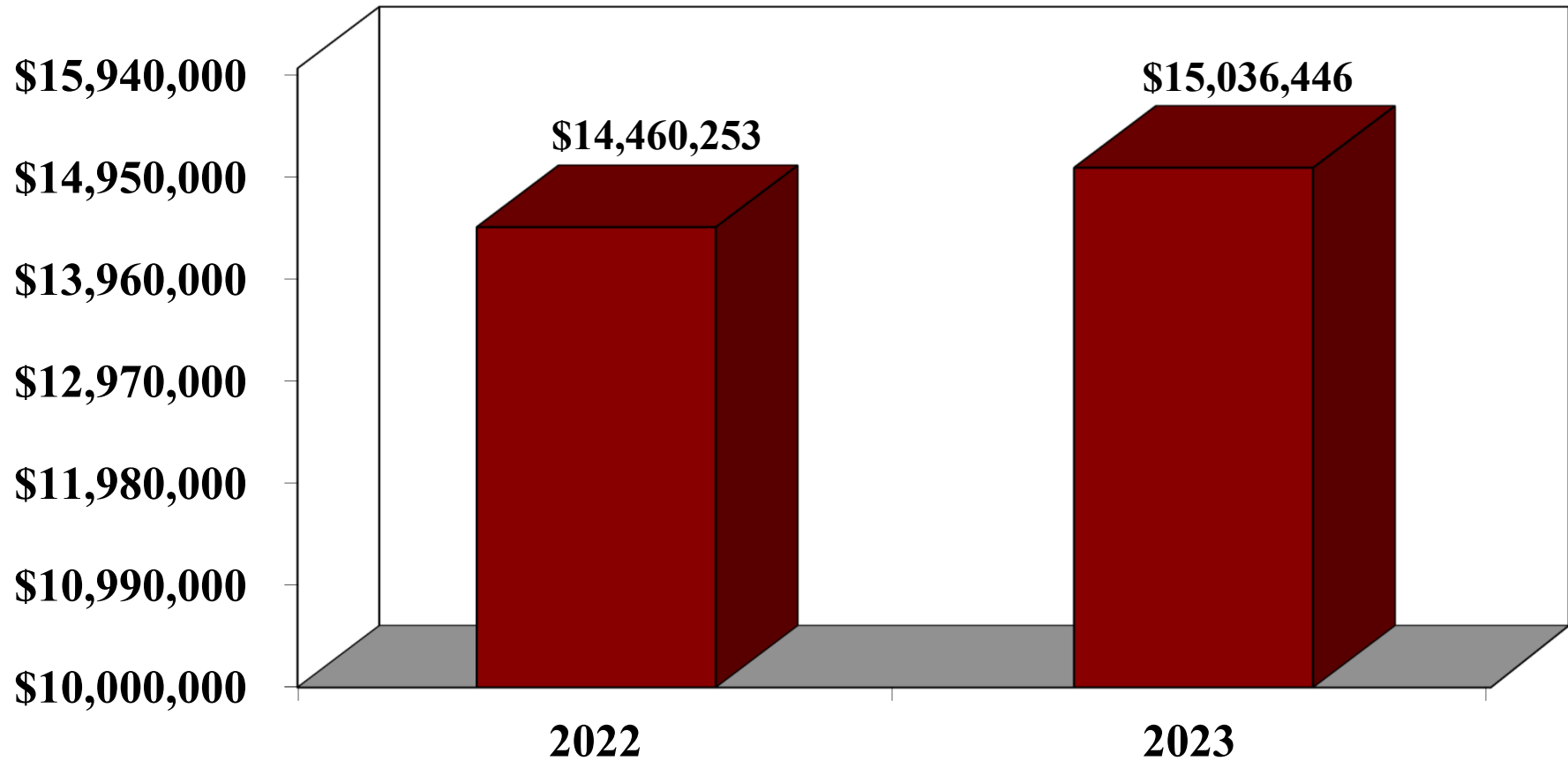


Population group: 25,000 – 49,999

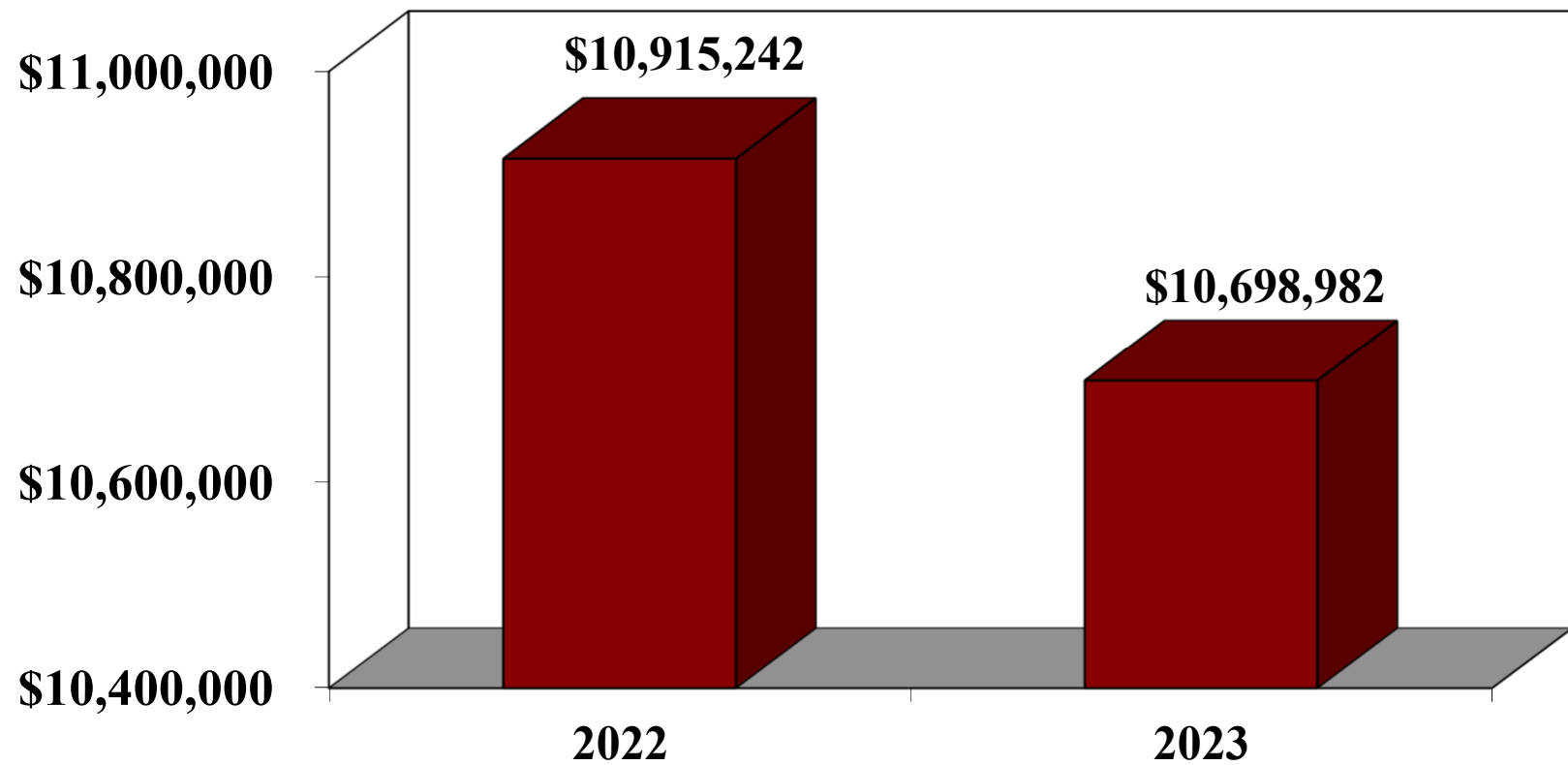
# GENERAL FUND SUMMARY



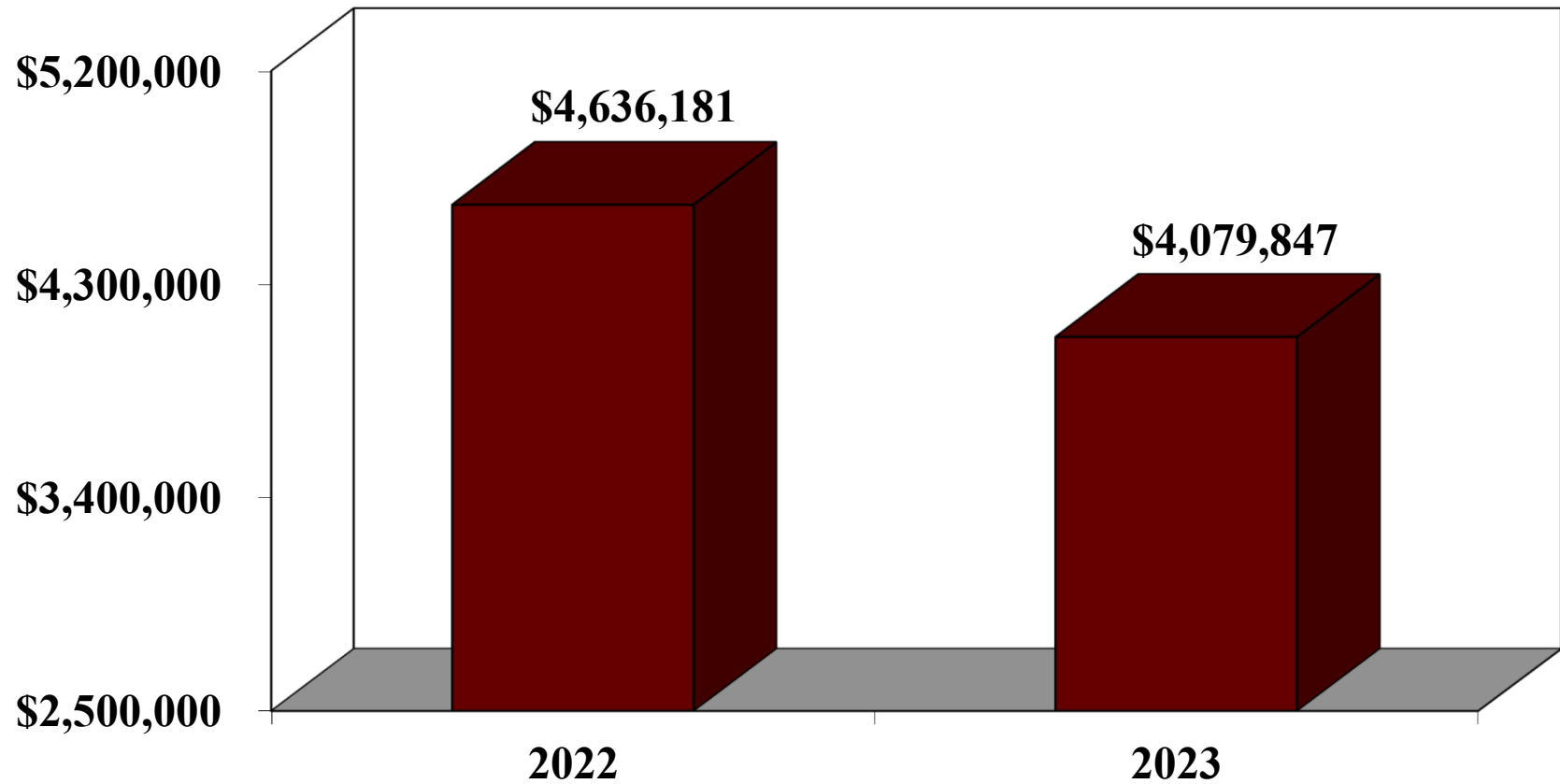
## AD VALOREM TAX



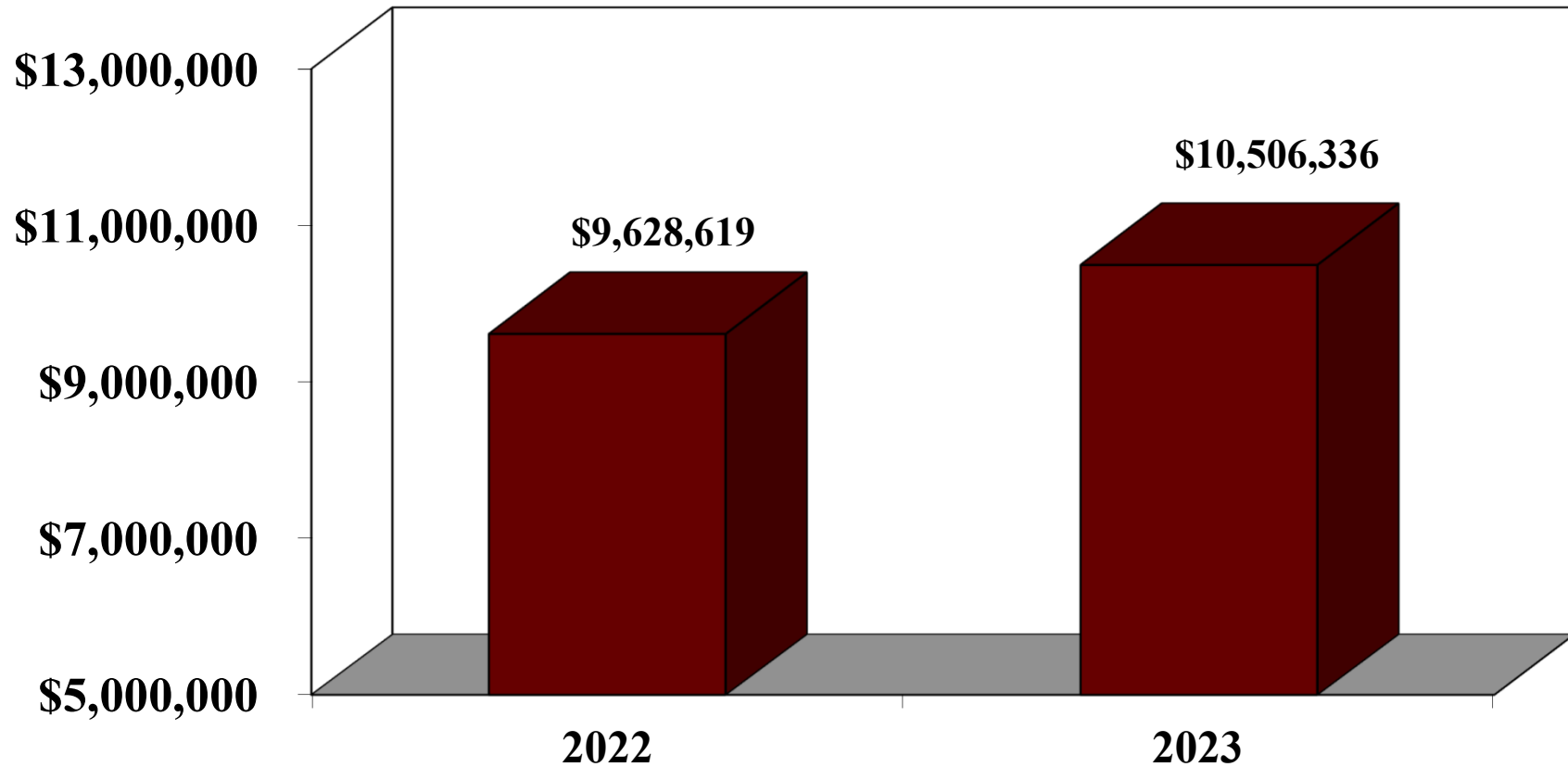
## INTERGOVERNMENTAL



## SALES AND SERVICES

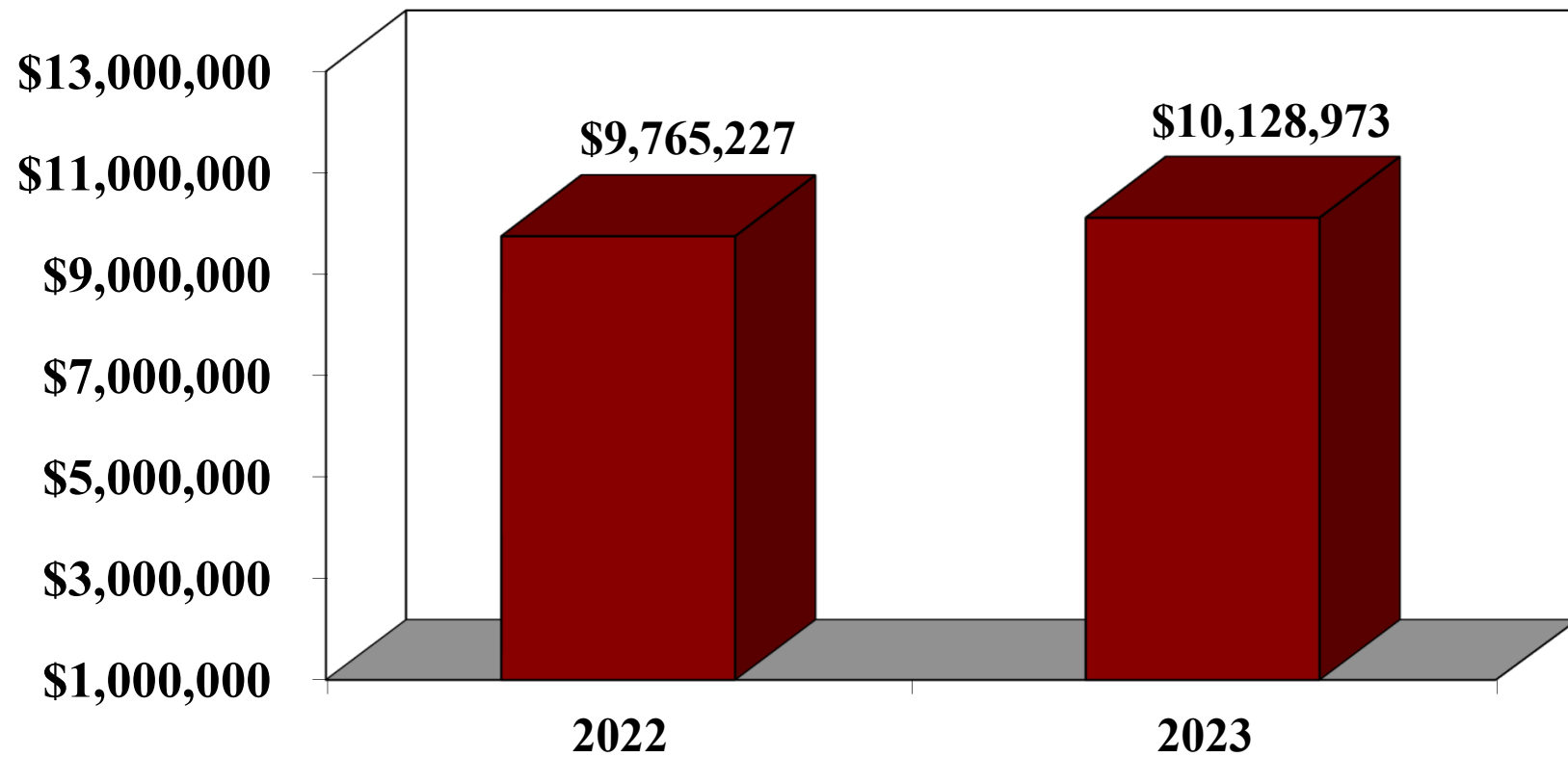


## OTHER TAXES AND LICENSES

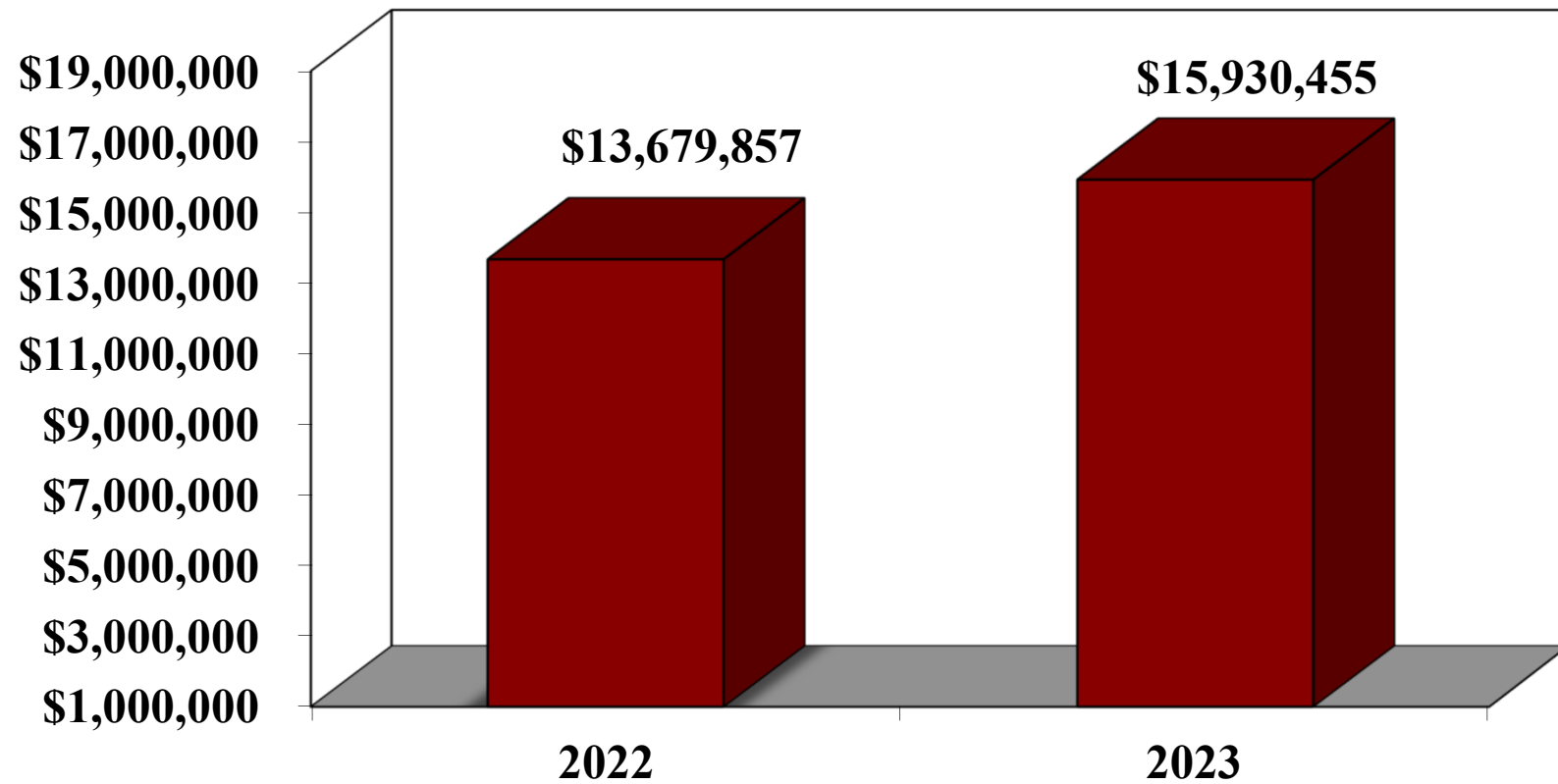




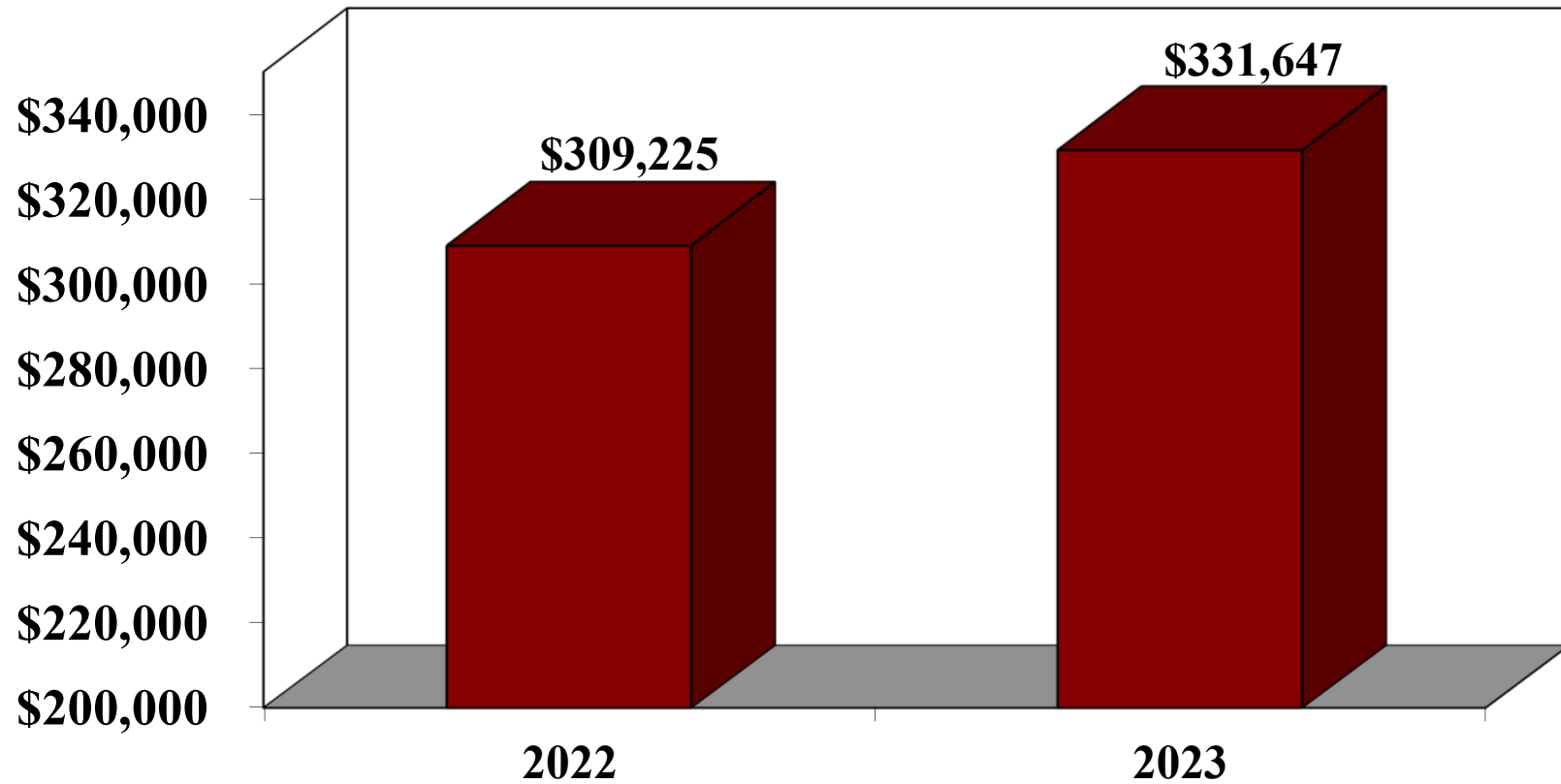
# HUMAN SERVICES



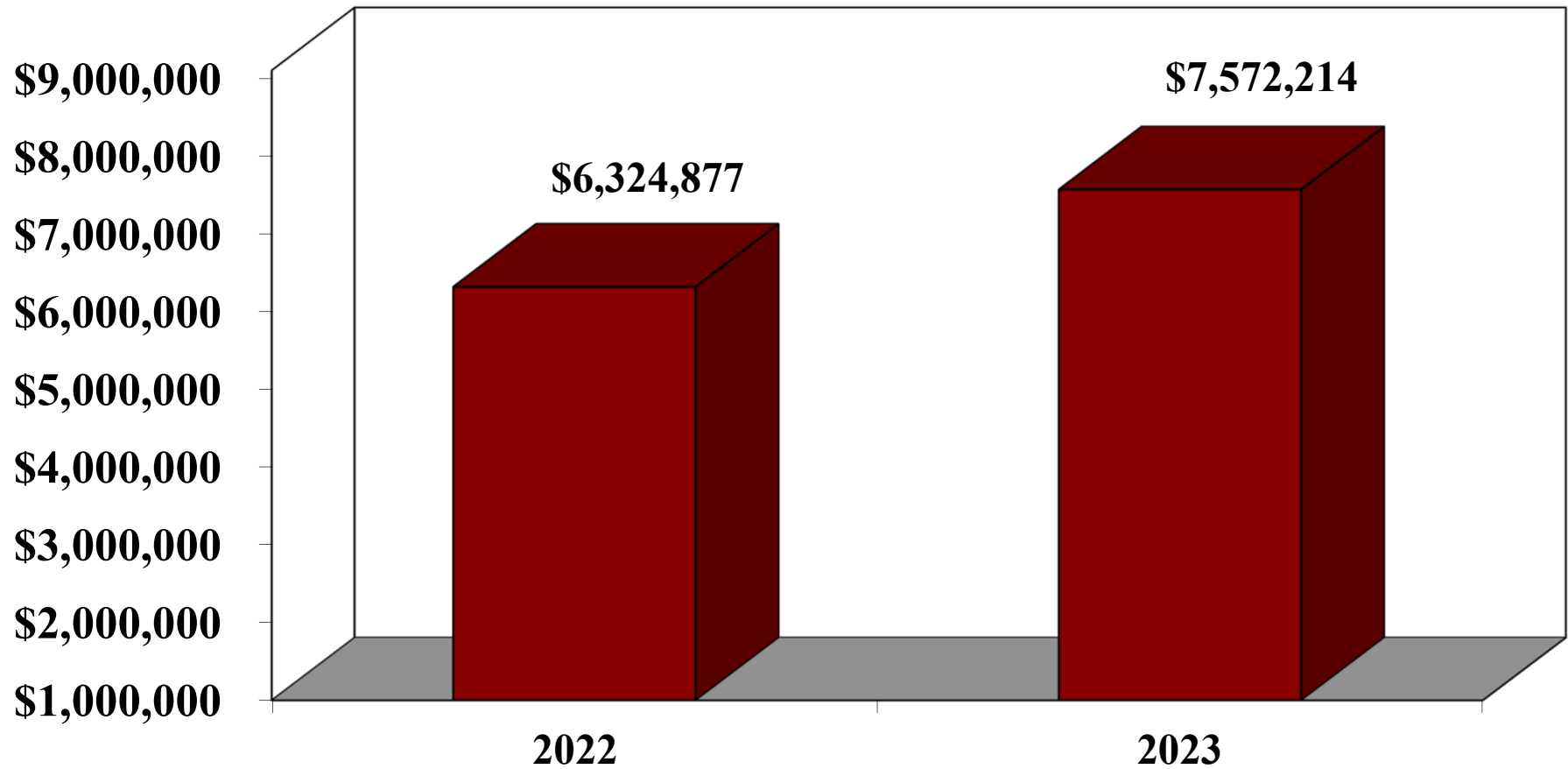
## PUBLIC SAFETY



# EDUCATION



## GENERAL GOVERNMENT



# PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- ❑ High Quick Ratio for Water and Sewer
- ❑ Improved available FB %
- ❑ 1 Significant Deficiency Finding
- ❑ 3 Material Weakness Findings





# Questions?

Kelly Gooderham



828.327.2727



[kgooderham@msa.cpa](mailto:kgooderham@msa.cpa)



[www.msa.cpa](http://www.msa.cpa)



MARTIN ♦ STARNES  
& ASSOCIATES, CPAs, P.A.





**Board of County Commissioners  
February 12, 2024  
6:00 PM**

**Item number: VII.d.**

**Strategic Planning**

Contact: Chairman Brad Chandler

Summary:

Chairman Chandler will present information at the meeting about strategic planning for this year.



**Board of County Commissioners  
February 12, 2024  
6:00 PM**

**Item number: VII.e.**

**Clarification of Employee Totals**

Contact: Interim Manager/Clerk to the Board Amber Brown

**Summary:**

Interim Manager Brown will present updated employee totals at the request of the Board. Information to be shared will include total number of employees, number of full-time employees, number of part-time employees, etc.



**Board of County Commissioners  
February 12, 2024  
6:00 PM**

**Item number: VIII.a.**

**Walnut Cove Planning and Zoning Board ETJ Appointments**

Contact: Interim Manager/Clerk to the Board Amber Brown

**Summary:**

Cory Willoughby, the Zoning Administrator for the Town of Walnut Cove, sent three applications for recommended members to serve on the Walnut Cove Planning and Zoning Board as ETJ Members. Since these positions are ETJ Members, they will need approval by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners. There are two positions on this Board and one position for an Alternate on the Board. Attached are the appointment applications for Greg LaRoche, Lisa Lee Hairston, and Worth Younts.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Walnut Cove Planning and Zoning Board Appointment Applications	1/20/2024	Cover Memo
Worth Younts Appointment Application	2/9/2024	Cover Memo



# STOKES COUNTY APPOINTMENT APPLICATION

NAME: GREG LaRoche AGE: 47  
ADDRESS: 1492 HINSDALE RD  
CITY: Walnut Cove STATE: NC ZIP: 27052  
E-MAIL: GLaRoche0976@Icloud.com PHONE: 336-624-3776

PLEASE INDICATE THE COMMITTEE OR BOARD YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SERVING ON:

ETS MEMBER Walnut Cove Planning & Zoning

Comments: Please note why you are interested in serving on this committee.

I HAVE SERVED ON PLANNING & ZONING FOR 3 YEARS  
AND I STILL HAVE OR WANT TO SERVE MY COMMUNITY  
IN THIS WAY

Conflicts of Interest: Please list any conflicts that would limit your ability to serve on this committee or board.

N/A

\*\*IT IS PREFERRED TO ATTACH OR INCLUDE REFERENCES OR A RESUME IF AVAILABLE.

Fax/Mail/Email appointment application to **Amber Brown, Clerk to the Board**,  
PO Box 20, Danbury, NC 27016 | Phone: 336-593-2448 | Fax: 336-593-2346  
Email: [anbrown@co.stokes.nc.us](mailto:anbrown@co.stokes.nc.us)



# STOKES COUNTY APPOINTMENT APPLICATION

NAME: Lisa Lee Hairston AGE: 61

ADDRESS: 1068 Whicker Road, Walnut Cove, NC 27052

CITY: Walnut Cove, STATE: NC ZIP: 27052

E-MAIL: lisa.lee.hairston@yahoo.com PHONE: (336) 591-7628

PLEASE INDICATE THE COMMITTEE OR BOARD YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SERVING ON:

ETJ Member of the town of Walnut Cove Planning and Zoning Board

Comments: Please note why you are interested in serving on this committee.

I am a High performance thinker and I want to see our town functioning at a higher level than it has before. A town is no greater than its citizens and vice versa.

Conflicts of Interest: Please list any conflicts that would limit your ability to serve on this committee or board.

None. I was appointed to this position on January of 2020.

\*\*IT IS PREFERRED TO ATTACH OR INCLUDE REFERENCES OR A RESUME IF AVAILABLE.

Fax/Mail/Email appointment application to **Amber Brown, Clerk to the Board,**  
PO Box 20, Danbury, NC 27016 | Phone: 336-593-2448 | Fax: 336-593-2346  
Email: [anbrown@co.stokes.nc.us](mailto:anbrown@co.stokes.nc.us)



# STOKES COUNTY

## APPOINTMENT

## APPLICATION

NAME:  AGE:

ADDRESS:

CITY:  STATE:  ZIP:

E-MAIL:  PHONE:

PLEASE INDICATE THE COMMITTEE OR BOARD YOU ARE INTERESTED IN SERVING ON:

Comments: Please note why you are interested in serving on this committee.

I am a life long resident of Walnut Cove, having lived in the ETJ this entire time.

I practice architecture and deal with zoning ordinances all over NC, SC and VA.

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Conflicts of Interest: Please list any conflicts that would limit your ability to serve this committee or board.

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**\*\*IT IS PREFERRED TO ATTACH OR INCLUDE REFERENCES OR A RESUME IF AVAILABLE.**

Fax/Mail/Email appointment application to **Amber Brown, Clerk to the Board,**  
PO Box 20, Danbury, NC 27016 | Phone: 336-593-2448 | Fax: 336-593-2346

Email: [anbrown@co.stokes.nc.us](mailto:anbrown@co.stokes.nc.us)





**Board of County Commissioners  
February 12, 2024  
6:00 PM**

**Item number: VIII.b.**

**Budget Goals for FY 24/25**

Contact:

Summary:

In past years, the Board of Commissioners have held Budget Goals meetings prior to the start of budget season to outline their priorities and wishes for the budget. This year, there will be a Strategic Planning Session held at the end of February where the Board will outline short and long-term goals along with a plan for how to achieve these. Because of this, a budget goals item on the agenda is more appropriate than a separate meeting so that the Board can give brief guidance as department heads are already working on their budget requests for the manager. Major short and long-term goals of the Board will be discussed later and shared once a strategic plan is established.



**Board of County Commissioners**  
**February 12, 2024**  
**6:00 PM**

**Item number: VIII.c.**

**Electronic Advertisement of Solicitations for Bid**

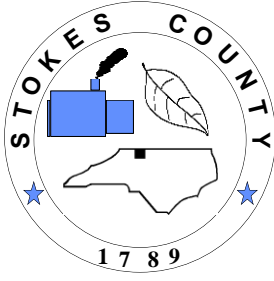
Contact: Glenda Pruitt, Purchasing/Project Manager

**Summary:**

Resolution to authorize electronic advertisement which will allow for advertisement of solicitations for bid using electronic means in lieu of placing an advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Authorize Electronic Advertisement	2/9/2024	Cover Memo
Resolution Authorizing Electronic Advertisement	2/9/2024	Resolution Letter
General Statute 143-129	2/9/2024	Backup Material



*Stokes County*  
*Purchasing Department*

Memorandum

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Glenda Pruitt, Purchasing/Project Manager

Date: February 9, 2024

Re: Resolution to Authorize Electronic Advertisement

Attached is a resolution to authorize electronic advertisement and General Statute 143-129. This will allow for advertisement of solicitations for bid using electronic means in lieu of placing an advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation. This will save on advertising costs. Posting on the HUB, state, and county websites are all free. I would like to request the Board's approval of the attached resolution. County Attorney Browder has reviewed and approved the resolution presented.

Resolution to Authorize the Use of Electronic Advertisement  
for Contracts Subject to G.S. 143-129.

Whereas, contracts for construction or repair work, and for the purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, and equipment that meet the monetary threshold established in G.S. 143-129 must be publicly advertised; and

Whereas, G.S. 143-129(b) authorizes the governing board to allow the use of electronic advertisement as an alternative to advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation; and

Whereas, in some cases, advertisement in the newspaper may be the most effective method of obtaining competition, but in other cases, advertisement by electronic means may be a more effective and efficient method of reaching prospective bidders; and

Whereas, it is in all cases important to provide citizens an opportunity to obtain information about major contracts to be awarded by this entity;

Therefore, the Board of Commissioners of Stokes County resolves:

The Purchasing/Project Manager or his or her designee is authorized to advertise solicitations for bid using electronic means in lieu of placing an advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation whenever he or she determines it to be the most effective and efficient method of obtaining competition for a contract.

Advertisement by newspaper and electronic means may be used together or in the alternative, and the requirements of G.S. 143-129(b) shall be met as long as one of the methods used meets the specific requirements and minimum time for advertisement under that statute.

Adopted this 12th day of February 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Brad Chandler- Chairman**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Keith Wood-Vice Chairman**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Sonya Cox- Commissioner**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Ronnie Mendenhall- Commissioner**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Rick Morris – Commissioner**

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Amber Brown –Clerk to the Board**

**§ 143-129. Procedure for letting of public contracts.**

(a) Bidding Required. – No construction or repair work requiring the estimated expenditure of public money in an amount equal to or more than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) or purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment requiring an estimated expenditure of public money in an amount equal to or more than ninety thousand dollars (\$90,000) may be performed, nor may any contract be awarded therefor, by any board or governing body of the State, or of any institution of the State government, or of any political subdivision of the State, unless the provisions of this section are complied with; provided that The University of North Carolina and its constituent institutions may award contracts for construction or repair work that requires an estimated expenditure of less than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) without complying with the provisions of this section.

For purchases of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment, the governing body of any political subdivision of the State may, subject to any restriction as to dollar amount, or other conditions that the governing body elects to impose, delegate to the manager, school superintendent, chief purchasing official, or other employee the authority to award contracts, reject bids, or readvertise to receive bids on behalf of the unit. Any person to whom authority is delegated under this subsection shall comply with the requirements of this Article that would otherwise apply to the governing body.

(b) Advertisement and Letting of Contracts. – Where the contract is to be let by a board or governing body of the State government or of a State institution, proposals shall be invited by advertisement in a newspaper having general circulation in the State of North Carolina. Where the contract is to be let by a political subdivision of the State, proposals shall be invited by advertisement in a newspaper having general circulation in the political subdivision or by electronic means, or both. A decision to advertise solely by electronic means, whether for particular contracts or generally for all contracts that are subject to this Article, shall be approved by the governing board of the political subdivision of the State at a regular meeting of the board.

The advertisements for bidders required by this section shall appear at a time where at least seven full days shall lapse between the date on which the notice appears and the date of the opening of bids. The advertisement shall: (i) state the time and place where plans and specifications of proposed work or a complete description of the apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment may be had; (ii) state the time and place for opening of the proposals; and (iii) reserve to the board or governing body the right to reject any or all proposals.

Proposals may be rejected for any reason determined by the board or governing body to be in the best interest of the unit. However, the proposal shall not be rejected for the purpose of evading the provisions of this Article. No board or governing body of the State or political subdivision thereof may assume responsibility for construction or purchase contracts, or guarantee the payments of labor or materials therefor except under provisions of this Article.

All proposals shall be opened in public and the board or governing body shall award the contract to the lowest responsible bidder or bidders, taking into consideration quality, performance and the time specified in the proposals for the performance of the contract.

In the event the lowest responsible bids are in excess of the funds available for the project or purchase, the responsible board or governing body is authorized to enter into negotiations with the lowest responsible bidder above mentioned, making reasonable changes in the plans and specifications as may be necessary to bring the contract price within the funds available, and may award a contract to such bidder upon recommendation of the Department of Administration in the case of the State government or of a State institution or agency, or upon recommendation of the responsible commission, council or board in the case of a subdivision of the State, if such bidder will agree to perform the work or provide the apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment at the negotiated price within the funds available therefor. If a contract cannot be let under the above conditions, the board or governing body is authorized to readvertise, as herein provided,

after having made such changes in plans and specifications as may be necessary to bring the cost of the project or purchase within the funds available therefor. The procedure above specified may be repeated if necessary in order to secure an acceptable contract within the funds available therefor.

No proposal for construction or repair work may be considered or accepted by said board or governing body unless at the time of its filing the same shall be accompanied by a deposit with said board or governing body of cash, or a cashier's check, or a certified check on some bank or trust company insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in an amount equal to not less than five percent (5%) of the proposal. In lieu of making the cash deposit as above provided, such bidder may file a bid bond executed by a corporate surety licensed under the laws of North Carolina to execute such bonds, conditioned that the surety will upon demand forthwith make payment to the obligee upon said bond if the bidder fails to execute the contract in accordance with the bid bond. This deposit shall be retained if the successful bidder fails to execute the contract within 10 days after the award or fails to give satisfactory surety as required herein.

Bids shall be sealed and the opening of an envelope or package with knowledge that it contains a bid or the disclosure or exhibition of the contents of any bid by anyone without the permission of the bidder prior to the time set for opening in the invitation to bid shall constitute a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(c) Contract Execution and Security. – All contracts to which this section applies shall be executed in writing. The board or governing body shall require the person to whom the award of a contract for construction or repair work is made to furnish bond as required by Article 3 of Chapter 44A; or require a deposit of money, certified check or government securities for the full amount of said contract to secure the faithful performance of the terms of said contract and the payment of all sums due for labor and materials in a manner consistent with Article 3 of Chapter 44A; and the contract shall not be altered except by written agreement of the contractor and the board or governing body. The surety bond or deposit required herein shall be deposited with the board or governing body for which the work is to be performed. When a deposit, other than a surety bond, is made with the board or governing body, the board or governing body assumes all the liabilities, obligations and duties of a surety as provided in Article 3 of Chapter 44A to the extent of said deposit.

The owning agency or the Department of Administration, in contracts involving a State agency, and the owning agency or the governing board, in contracts involving a political subdivision of the State, may reject the bonds of any surety company against which there is pending any unsettled claim or complaint made by a State agency or the owning agency or governing board of any political subdivision of the State arising out of any contract under which State funds, in contracts with the State, or funds of political subdivisions of the State, in contracts with such political subdivision, were expended, provided such claim or complaint has been pending more than 180 days.

(d) Use of Unemployment Relief Labor. – Nothing in this section shall operate so as to require any public agency to enter into a contract which will prevent the use of unemployment relief labor paid for in whole or in part by appropriations or funds furnished by the State or federal government.

(e) Exceptions. – The requirements of this Article do not apply to:

- (1) The purchase, lease, or other acquisition of any apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment from: (i) the United States of America or any agency thereof; or (ii) any other government unit or agency thereof within the United States. The Secretary of Administration or the governing board of any political subdivision of the State may designate any officer or employee of the State or political subdivision to enter a bid or bids in its behalf at any sale of apparatus, supplies, materials, equipment, or other property owned by: (i) the United



States of America or any agency thereof; or (ii) any other governmental unit or agency thereof within the United States. The Secretary of Administration or the governing board of any political subdivision of the State may authorize the officer or employee to make any partial or down payment or payment in full that may be required by regulations of the governmental unit or agency disposing of the property.

- (2) Cases of special emergency involving the health and safety of the people or their property.
- (3) Purchases made through a competitive bidding group purchasing program, which is a formally organized program that offers competitively obtained purchasing services at discount prices to two or more public agencies.
- (4) Construction or repair work undertaken during the progress of a construction or repair project initially begun pursuant to this section.
- (5) Purchase of gasoline, diesel fuel, alcohol fuel, motor oil, fuel oil, or natural gas. These purchases are subject to G.S. 143-131.
- (6) Purchases of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment when: (i) performance or price competition for a product are not available; (ii) a needed product is available from only one source of supply; or (iii) standardization or compatibility is the overriding consideration. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the governing board of a political subdivision of the State shall approve the purchases listed in the preceding sentence prior to the award of the contract.

In the case of purchases by hospitals, in addition to the other exceptions in this subsection, the provisions of this Article shall not apply when: (i) a particular medical item or prosthetic appliance is needed; (ii) a particular product is ordered by an attending physician for his patients; (iii) additional products are needed to complete an ongoing job or task; (iv) products are purchased for "over-the-counter" resale; (v) a particular product is needed or desired for experimental, developmental, or research work; or (vi) equipment is already installed, connected, and in service under a lease or other agreement and the governing body of the hospital determines that the equipment should be purchased. The governing body of a hospital shall keep a record of all purchases made pursuant to this subdivision. These records are subject to public inspection.

- (7) Purchases of information technology through contracts established by the Department of Information Technology as provided in Article 15 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes.
- (8) Guaranteed energy savings contracts, which are governed by Article 3B of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes.
- (9) Purchases from contracts established by the State or any agency of the State, if the contractor is willing to extend to a political subdivision of the State the same or more favorable prices, terms, and conditions as established in the State contract.
- (9a) Purchases of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment from contracts established by the United States of America or any federal agency, if the contractor is willing to extend to a political subdivision of the State the same or more favorable prices, terms, and conditions as established in the federal contract.
- (10) Purchase of used apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment. For purposes of this subdivision, remanufactured, refabricated or demo apparatus, supplies,

materials, or equipment are not included in the exception. A demo item is one that is used for demonstration and is sold by the manufacturer or retailer at a discount.

(11) Contracts by a public entity with a construction manager at risk executed pursuant to G.S. 143-128.1.

(12) Build-to-suit capital leases with a private developer under G.S. 115C-532.

(f) Repealed by Session Laws 2001-328, s. 1, effective August 2, 2001.

(g) Waiver of Bidding for Previously Bid Contracts. – When the governing board of any political subdivision of the State, or the person to whom authority has been delegated under subsection (a) of this section, determines that it is in the best interest of the unit, the requirements of this section may be waived for the purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment from any person or entity that has, within the previous 12 months, after having completed a public, formal bid process substantially similar to that required by this Article, contracted to furnish the apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment to:

(1) The United States of America or any federal agency;

(2) The State of North Carolina or any agency or political subdivision of the State;  
or

(3) Any other state or any agency or political subdivision of that state, if the person or entity is willing to furnish the items at the same or more favorable prices, terms, and conditions as those provided under the contract with the other unit or agency. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, any purchase made under this subsection shall be approved by the governing body of the purchasing political subdivision of the State at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing body no fewer than 10 days after publication of notice that a waiver of the bid procedure will be considered in order to contract with a qualified supplier pursuant to this section. Notice may be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the political subdivision or by electronic means, or both. A decision to publish notice solely by electronic means for a particular contract or for all contracts under this subsection shall be approved by the governing board of the political subdivision. Rules issued by the Secretary of Administration pursuant to G.S. 143-49(6) shall apply with respect to participation in State term contracts.

(h) Transportation Authority Purchases. – Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, any board or governing body of any regional public transportation authority, hereafter referred to as a "RPTA," created pursuant to Article 26 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, or a regional transportation authority, hereafter referred to as a "RTA," created pursuant to Article 27 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, may approve the entering into of any contract for the purchase, lease, or other acquisition of any apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment without competitive bidding and without meeting the requirements of subsection (b) of this section if the following procurement by competitive proposal (Request for Proposal) method is followed.

The competitive proposal method of procurement is normally conducted with more than one source submitting an offer or proposal. Either a fixed price or cost reimbursement type contract is awarded. This method of procurement is generally used when conditions are not appropriate for the use of sealed bids. If this procurement method is used, all of the following requirements apply:

(1) Requests for proposals shall be publicized. All evaluation factors shall be identified along with their relative importance.

(2) Proposals shall be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources.

- (3) RPTAs or RTAs shall have a method in place for conducting technical evaluations of proposals received and selecting awardees, with the goal of promoting fairness and competition without requiring strict adherence to specifications or price in determining the most advantageous proposal.
- (4) The award may be based upon initial proposals without further discussion or negotiation or, in the discretion of the evaluators, discussions or negotiations may be conducted either with all offerors or with those offerors determined to be within the competitive range, and one or more revised proposals or a best and final offer may be requested of all remaining offerors. The details and deficiencies of an offeror's proposal may not be disclosed to other offerors during any period of negotiation or discussion.
- (5) The award shall be made to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the RPTA's or the RTA's program with price and other factors considered.

The contents of the proposals shall not be public records until 14 days before the award of the contract.

The board or governing body of the RPTA or the RTA shall, at the regularly scheduled meeting, by formal motion make findings of fact that the procurement by competitive proposal (Request for Proposals) method of procuring the particular apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment is the most appropriate acquisition method prior to the issuance of the requests for proposals and shall by formal motion certify that the requirements of this subsection have been followed before approving the contract.

Nothing in this subsection subjects a procurement by competitive proposal under this subsection to G.S. 143-49, 143-52, or 143-53.

RPTAs and RTAs may adopt regulations to implement this subsection.

(i) Procedure for Letting of Public Contracts. – The Department of Transportation ("DOT") and the Department of Administration ("DOA") shall monitor all projects in those agencies that are let without a performance or payment bond to determine the number of defaults on those projects, the cost to complete each defaulted project, and each project's contract price. Beginning March 1, 2011, and annually thereafter, DOT and DOA shall report this information to the Joint Legislative Committee on Governmental Operations.

(j) [Use of E-Verify Required. –] No contract subject to this section may be awarded by any board or governing body of the State, institution of State government, or any political subdivision of the State unless the contractor and the contractor's subcontractors comply with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the General Statutes. (1931, c. 338, s. 1; 1933, c. 50; c. 400, s. 1; 1937, c. 355; 1945, c. 144; 1949, c. 257; 1951, c. 1104, ss. 1, 2; 1953, c. 1268; 1955, c. 1049; 1957, c. 269, s. 3; c. 391; c. 862, ss. 1-4; 1959, c. 392, s. 1; c. 910, s. 1; 1961, c. 1226; 1965, c. 841, s. 2; 1967, c. 860; 1971, c. 847; 1973, c. 1194, s. 2; 1975, c. 879, s. 46; 1977, c. 619, ss. 1, 2; 1979, c. 182, s. 1; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1081; 1981, c. 346, s. 1; c. 754, s. 1; 1985, c. 145, ss. 1, 2; 1987, c. 590; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1108, ss. 7, 8; 1989, c. 350; 1993, c. 539, s. 1007; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1995, c. 367, s. 6; 1997-174, ss. 1-4; 1998-185, s. 1; 1998-217, s. 16; 2001-328, s. 1; 2001-487, s. 88; 2001-496, ss. 4, 5; 2005-227, s. 1; 2006-232, s. 2; 2007-94, s. 1; 2007-322, s. 4; 2007-446, s. 6; 2010-148, s. 1.2; 2011-234, s. 1; 2013-418, s. 2(c); 2015-241, s. 7A.4(s); 2017-81, s. 1; 2021-80, s. 2.8.)



**Board of County Commissioners  
February 12, 2024  
6:00 PM**

**Item number: IX.a.**

**Draft Resolution Authorizing the Establishment of an Occupancy Tax and Tourism Development Authority**

Contact: Tory Mabe, Economic Development and Tourism

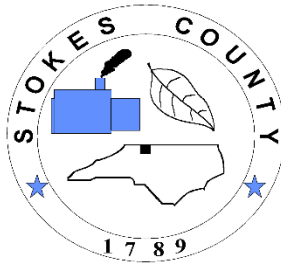
**Summary:**

Attached for review and approval is a Draft Resolution for Authorizing and Establishing an Occupancy Tax and Tourism Development Authority (TDA) in Stokes County.

Under SB 154, Session Law 2023-144, Stokes County was granted the authority by the NC General Assembly to levy an occupancy tax of a rate up to six percent (6%). Two public informational meetings were held on the occupancy tax where the public and vacation rental owners were invited to learn more and ask questions regarding this topic. The Public Hearing was held at the Monday, January 8, 2024, Regular Board of Commissioners Meeting.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Draft Resolution for Occupancy Tax Collection and TDA Formation	1/20/2024	Cover Memo



## **RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OCCUPANCY TAX AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY IN STOKES COUNTY**

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Commissioners of Stokes County, North Carolina, RESOLVE that on the effective date of this resolution, that a countywide occupancy tax be levied pursuant to the authority granted by the North Carolina General Assembly under SB 154, Session Law 2023-144.

**WHEREAS**, the Stokes County Commissioners here-in establish an Occupancy Tax of six percent (6%) of the gross receipts derived from the rental of any room, lodging, or accommodations furnished by hotel, motel, bed and breakfast, vacation rentals, glamping site or similar place within the county that is subject to sales tax as imposed by the State under G. S. 105-164.4(a)(3), and;

**WHEREAS**, the industry of tourism is like any other industry, whose recognition and development are dependent upon public exposure and knowledge of availability of resources, and;

**WHEREAS**, the Stokes County Board of Commissioners wish to encourage an atmosphere conducive to prospective travelers who seek areas where the focus is on families, friends, agriculture, outdoors, and enjoyment of the communities around us, and;

**WHEREAS**, the following conditions apply upon the effective date of this Resolution:

Administration. – A tax levied under this section shall be levied, administered, collected, and repealed as provided in G.S. 153A-155. The penalties provided in G.S. 153A-155 apply to a tax levied under this section.

Distribution and Use of Tax Revenue. – Stokes County shall, on a quarterly basis, remit the net proceeds of the occupancy tax to the Stokes County Tourism Development Authority. The Authority shall use at least two-thirds of the funds to promote travel and tourism and shall use the remainder for tourism-related expenditures in the county. The following definitions apply in this subsection:

- (1) Net proceeds. – Gross proceeds less the cost to the county of administering and collecting the tax, as determined by the finance officer, not to exceed three percent (3%) of the first five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) of gross proceeds collected each year and one percent (1%) of the remaining gross receipts collected each year.
- (2) Promote travel and tourism. – To advertise or market an area or activity, publish and distribute pamphlets and other materials, conduct market research, or engage in similar promotional activities that attract tourists or business travelers to the area. The term includes administrative expenses incurred in engaging in the listed activities.

(3) Tourism-related expenditures. – Expenditures that, in the judgment of the Tourism Development Authority, are designed to increase the use of accommodations, meeting facilities, or convention facilities in the county or to attract tourists or business travelers to the county. The term includes tourism-related capital expenditures

**WHEREAS**, the Stokes County Board of Commissioners establishes a Stokes County Tourism Development Authority that shall consist of seven (7) voting members and three (3) ex-officio, non-voting members where the following rules and terms shall apply:

- ❖ Pursuant to the enabling legislation, at least one-third of the members shall be individuals who are affiliated with businesses that collect the tax in the county, and at least one-half of the members shall be individuals who are currently active in the promotion of travel and tourism in the county.
- ❖ Three (3) out of the seven (7) members must be affiliated with the business of collecting the tax in the county and shall be appointed to the Authority and will serve two-year terms.
- ❖ Four (4) out of the seven (7) members must be currently active in the promotion of travel and tourism in the county. These members should be involved in businesses or professions who have demonstrated an interest in tourism development in such a way that their expertise would benefit the Authority. These members will serve three-year terms.
  - Of these four (4) members, the below breakdown shall be followed:
    - One (1) member shall be nominated by the governing body from each of the three incorporated municipalities including the Town of Danbury, the City of King, and the Town of Walnut Cove.
    - One (1) member shall be nominated by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.
- ❖ A member may serve additional terms without limits but must be reappointed by the Board of Commissioners for each additional term served.
- ❖ The Finance Director for Stokes County shall be the ex-officio finance officer of the Authority and hold non-voting powers.
- ❖ A tourism representative from the Economic Development and Tourism Office shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member and serve as an Advisor in assisting the Tourism Development Authority Chair and serving as the link between the County of Stokes and the Authority.
- ❖ A representative from the County Manager's Office shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member.
- ❖ All vacancies on the Authority shall be officially appointed by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.
- ❖ The Stokes County Board of Commissioners shall designate one member of the authority as chair at the creation of the Tourism Development Authority Board. Thereafter, the chairperson will be selected by the Authority Board.
- ❖ The Authority shall meet at the call of the chair and shall adopt rules of procedure to govern its meetings.
- ❖ The Authority shall report quarterly and at the close of the fiscal year to the Stokes County Board of Commissioners on its receipts and expenditures for the preceding quarter and for the year in such detail as approved by the Board of Commissioners.



**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Stokes County Board of Commissioners hereby levy a six percent (6%) Occupancy Tax of the gross receipts derived from the rental of any room, lodging or accommodation furnished by a hotel, motel, bed and breakfast, vacation rental, glamping site or similar place within the county that is subject to sales tax as imposed by the State under G. S. 105-164.4(a)(3) for the uses and purposes hereinabove set forth; and that the Stokes County Tourism Development Authority is established and shall be composed of a seven (7) member Authority as outlined in this resolution, and shall become effective April 1, 2024, and remain in effect until an amendment or change is approved to this adopted resolution.

Adopted the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Brad Chandler - Chairman**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Keith Wood – Vice Chairman**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Sonya Cox- Commissioner**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Ronnie Mendenhall – Commissioner**

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Rick Morris - Commissioner**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Amber N. Brown – Clerk to the Board**



**Board of County Commissioners**  
**February 12, 2024**  
**6:00 PM**

**Item number: IX.b.**

**Electronic Advertisement of Solicitations for Bid**

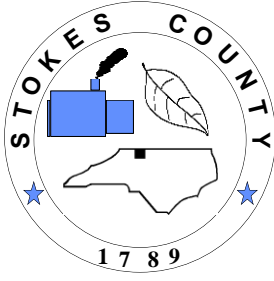
Contact: Glenda Pruitt, Purchasing/Project Manager

**Summary:**

Resolution to authorize electronic advertisement which will allow for advertisement of solicitations for bid using electronic means in lieu of placing an advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Authorize Electronic Advertisement	2/9/2024	Cover Memo
Resolution Authorizing Electronic Advertisement	2/9/2024	Resolution Letter
General Statute 143-129	2/9/2024	Backup Material



*Stokes County*  
*Purchasing Department*

Memorandum

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Glenda Pruitt, Purchasing/Project Manager

Date: February 9, 2024

Re: Resolution to Authorize Electronic Advertisement

Attached is a resolution to authorize electronic advertisement and General Statute 143-129. This will allow for advertisement of solicitations for bid using electronic means in lieu of placing an advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation. This will save on advertising costs. Posting on the HUB, state, and county websites are all free. I would like to request the Board's approval of the attached resolution. County Attorney Browder has reviewed and approved the resolution presented.

Resolution to Authorize the Use of Electronic Advertisement  
for Contracts Subject to G.S. 143-129.

Whereas, contracts for construction or repair work, and for the purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, and equipment that meet the monetary threshold established in G.S. 143-129 must be publicly advertised; and

Whereas, G.S. 143-129(b) authorizes the governing board to allow the use of electronic advertisement as an alternative to advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation; and

Whereas, in some cases, advertisement in the newspaper may be the most effective method of obtaining competition, but in other cases, advertisement by electronic means may be a more effective and efficient method of reaching prospective bidders; and

Whereas, it is in all cases important to provide citizens an opportunity to obtain information about major contracts to be awarded by this entity;

Therefore, the Board of Commissioners of Stokes County resolves:

The Purchasing/Project Manager or his or her designee is authorized to advertise solicitations for bid using electronic means in lieu of placing an advertisement in a newspaper of general circulation whenever he or she determines it to be the most effective and efficient method of obtaining competition for a contract.

Advertisement by newspaper and electronic means may be used together or in the alternative, and the requirements of G.S. 143-129(b) shall be met as long as one of the methods used meets the specific requirements and minimum time for advertisement under that statute.

Adopted this 12th day of February 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Brad Chandler- Chairman**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Keith Wood-Vice Chairman**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Sonya Cox- Commissioner**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Ronnie Mendenhall- Commissioner**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Rick Morris – Commissioner**

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Amber Brown –Clerk to the Board**

**§ 143-129. Procedure for letting of public contracts.**

(a) Bidding Required. – No construction or repair work requiring the estimated expenditure of public money in an amount equal to or more than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) or purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment requiring an estimated expenditure of public money in an amount equal to or more than ninety thousand dollars (\$90,000) may be performed, nor may any contract be awarded therefor, by any board or governing body of the State, or of any institution of the State government, or of any political subdivision of the State, unless the provisions of this section are complied with; provided that The University of North Carolina and its constituent institutions may award contracts for construction or repair work that requires an estimated expenditure of less than five hundred thousand dollars (\$500,000) without complying with the provisions of this section.

For purchases of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment, the governing body of any political subdivision of the State may, subject to any restriction as to dollar amount, or other conditions that the governing body elects to impose, delegate to the manager, school superintendent, chief purchasing official, or other employee the authority to award contracts, reject bids, or readvertise to receive bids on behalf of the unit. Any person to whom authority is delegated under this subsection shall comply with the requirements of this Article that would otherwise apply to the governing body.

(b) Advertisement and Letting of Contracts. – Where the contract is to be let by a board or governing body of the State government or of a State institution, proposals shall be invited by advertisement in a newspaper having general circulation in the State of North Carolina. Where the contract is to be let by a political subdivision of the State, proposals shall be invited by advertisement in a newspaper having general circulation in the political subdivision or by electronic means, or both. A decision to advertise solely by electronic means, whether for particular contracts or generally for all contracts that are subject to this Article, shall be approved by the governing board of the political subdivision of the State at a regular meeting of the board.

The advertisements for bidders required by this section shall appear at a time where at least seven full days shall lapse between the date on which the notice appears and the date of the opening of bids. The advertisement shall: (i) state the time and place where plans and specifications of proposed work or a complete description of the apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment may be had; (ii) state the time and place for opening of the proposals; and (iii) reserve to the board or governing body the right to reject any or all proposals.

Proposals may be rejected for any reason determined by the board or governing body to be in the best interest of the unit. However, the proposal shall not be rejected for the purpose of evading the provisions of this Article. No board or governing body of the State or political subdivision thereof may assume responsibility for construction or purchase contracts, or guarantee the payments of labor or materials therefor except under provisions of this Article.

All proposals shall be opened in public and the board or governing body shall award the contract to the lowest responsible bidder or bidders, taking into consideration quality, performance and the time specified in the proposals for the performance of the contract.

In the event the lowest responsible bids are in excess of the funds available for the project or purchase, the responsible board or governing body is authorized to enter into negotiations with the lowest responsible bidder above mentioned, making reasonable changes in the plans and specifications as may be necessary to bring the contract price within the funds available, and may award a contract to such bidder upon recommendation of the Department of Administration in the case of the State government or of a State institution or agency, or upon recommendation of the responsible commission, council or board in the case of a subdivision of the State, if such bidder will agree to perform the work or provide the apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment at the negotiated price within the funds available therefor. If a contract cannot be let under the above conditions, the board or governing body is authorized to readvertise, as herein provided,

after having made such changes in plans and specifications as may be necessary to bring the cost of the project or purchase within the funds available therefor. The procedure above specified may be repeated if necessary in order to secure an acceptable contract within the funds available therefor.

No proposal for construction or repair work may be considered or accepted by said board or governing body unless at the time of its filing the same shall be accompanied by a deposit with said board or governing body of cash, or a cashier's check, or a certified check on some bank or trust company insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in an amount equal to not less than five percent (5%) of the proposal. In lieu of making the cash deposit as above provided, such bidder may file a bid bond executed by a corporate surety licensed under the laws of North Carolina to execute such bonds, conditioned that the surety will upon demand forthwith make payment to the obligee upon said bond if the bidder fails to execute the contract in accordance with the bid bond. This deposit shall be retained if the successful bidder fails to execute the contract within 10 days after the award or fails to give satisfactory surety as required herein.

Bids shall be sealed and the opening of an envelope or package with knowledge that it contains a bid or the disclosure or exhibition of the contents of any bid by anyone without the permission of the bidder prior to the time set for opening in the invitation to bid shall constitute a Class 1 misdemeanor.

(c) Contract Execution and Security. – All contracts to which this section applies shall be executed in writing. The board or governing body shall require the person to whom the award of a contract for construction or repair work is made to furnish bond as required by Article 3 of Chapter 44A; or require a deposit of money, certified check or government securities for the full amount of said contract to secure the faithful performance of the terms of said contract and the payment of all sums due for labor and materials in a manner consistent with Article 3 of Chapter 44A; and the contract shall not be altered except by written agreement of the contractor and the board or governing body. The surety bond or deposit required herein shall be deposited with the board or governing body for which the work is to be performed. When a deposit, other than a surety bond, is made with the board or governing body, the board or governing body assumes all the liabilities, obligations and duties of a surety as provided in Article 3 of Chapter 44A to the extent of said deposit.

The owning agency or the Department of Administration, in contracts involving a State agency, and the owning agency or the governing board, in contracts involving a political subdivision of the State, may reject the bonds of any surety company against which there is pending any unsettled claim or complaint made by a State agency or the owning agency or governing board of any political subdivision of the State arising out of any contract under which State funds, in contracts with the State, or funds of political subdivisions of the State, in contracts with such political subdivision, were expended, provided such claim or complaint has been pending more than 180 days.

(d) Use of Unemployment Relief Labor. – Nothing in this section shall operate so as to require any public agency to enter into a contract which will prevent the use of unemployment relief labor paid for in whole or in part by appropriations or funds furnished by the State or federal government.

(e) Exceptions. – The requirements of this Article do not apply to:

- (1) The purchase, lease, or other acquisition of any apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment from: (i) the United States of America or any agency thereof; or (ii) any other government unit or agency thereof within the United States. The Secretary of Administration or the governing board of any political subdivision of the State may designate any officer or employee of the State or political subdivision to enter a bid or bids in its behalf at any sale of apparatus, supplies, materials, equipment, or other property owned by: (i) the United



States of America or any agency thereof; or (ii) any other governmental unit or agency thereof within the United States. The Secretary of Administration or the governing board of any political subdivision of the State may authorize the officer or employee to make any partial or down payment or payment in full that may be required by regulations of the governmental unit or agency disposing of the property.

- (2) Cases of special emergency involving the health and safety of the people or their property.
- (3) Purchases made through a competitive bidding group purchasing program, which is a formally organized program that offers competitively obtained purchasing services at discount prices to two or more public agencies.
- (4) Construction or repair work undertaken during the progress of a construction or repair project initially begun pursuant to this section.
- (5) Purchase of gasoline, diesel fuel, alcohol fuel, motor oil, fuel oil, or natural gas. These purchases are subject to G.S. 143-131.
- (6) Purchases of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment when: (i) performance or price competition for a product are not available; (ii) a needed product is available from only one source of supply; or (iii) standardization or compatibility is the overriding consideration. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, the governing board of a political subdivision of the State shall approve the purchases listed in the preceding sentence prior to the award of the contract.

In the case of purchases by hospitals, in addition to the other exceptions in this subsection, the provisions of this Article shall not apply when: (i) a particular medical item or prosthetic appliance is needed; (ii) a particular product is ordered by an attending physician for his patients; (iii) additional products are needed to complete an ongoing job or task; (iv) products are purchased for "over-the-counter" resale; (v) a particular product is needed or desired for experimental, developmental, or research work; or (vi) equipment is already installed, connected, and in service under a lease or other agreement and the governing body of the hospital determines that the equipment should be purchased. The governing body of a hospital shall keep a record of all purchases made pursuant to this subdivision. These records are subject to public inspection.

- (7) Purchases of information technology through contracts established by the Department of Information Technology as provided in Article 15 of Chapter 143B of the General Statutes.
- (8) Guaranteed energy savings contracts, which are governed by Article 3B of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes.
- (9) Purchases from contracts established by the State or any agency of the State, if the contractor is willing to extend to a political subdivision of the State the same or more favorable prices, terms, and conditions as established in the State contract.
- (9a) Purchases of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment from contracts established by the United States of America or any federal agency, if the contractor is willing to extend to a political subdivision of the State the same or more favorable prices, terms, and conditions as established in the federal contract.
- (10) Purchase of used apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment. For purposes of this subdivision, remanufactured, refabricated or demo apparatus, supplies,

materials, or equipment are not included in the exception. A demo item is one that is used for demonstration and is sold by the manufacturer or retailer at a discount.

(11) Contracts by a public entity with a construction manager at risk executed pursuant to G.S. 143-128.1.

(12) Build-to-suit capital leases with a private developer under G.S. 115C-532.

(f) Repealed by Session Laws 2001-328, s. 1, effective August 2, 2001.

(g) Waiver of Bidding for Previously Bid Contracts. – When the governing board of any political subdivision of the State, or the person to whom authority has been delegated under subsection (a) of this section, determines that it is in the best interest of the unit, the requirements of this section may be waived for the purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment from any person or entity that has, within the previous 12 months, after having completed a public, formal bid process substantially similar to that required by this Article, contracted to furnish the apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment to:

(1) The United States of America or any federal agency;

(2) The State of North Carolina or any agency or political subdivision of the State;  
or

(3) Any other state or any agency or political subdivision of that state, if the person or entity is willing to furnish the items at the same or more favorable prices, terms, and conditions as those provided under the contract with the other unit or agency. Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, any purchase made under this subsection shall be approved by the governing body of the purchasing political subdivision of the State at a regularly scheduled meeting of the governing body no fewer than 10 days after publication of notice that a waiver of the bid procedure will be considered in order to contract with a qualified supplier pursuant to this section. Notice may be published in a newspaper having general circulation in the political subdivision or by electronic means, or both. A decision to publish notice solely by electronic means for a particular contract or for all contracts under this subsection shall be approved by the governing board of the political subdivision. Rules issued by the Secretary of Administration pursuant to G.S. 143-49(6) shall apply with respect to participation in State term contracts.

(h) Transportation Authority Purchases. – Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, any board or governing body of any regional public transportation authority, hereafter referred to as a "RPTA," created pursuant to Article 26 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, or a regional transportation authority, hereafter referred to as a "RTA," created pursuant to Article 27 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, may approve the entering into of any contract for the purchase, lease, or other acquisition of any apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment without competitive bidding and without meeting the requirements of subsection (b) of this section if the following procurement by competitive proposal (Request for Proposal) method is followed.

The competitive proposal method of procurement is normally conducted with more than one source submitting an offer or proposal. Either a fixed price or cost reimbursement type contract is awarded. This method of procurement is generally used when conditions are not appropriate for the use of sealed bids. If this procurement method is used, all of the following requirements apply:

(1) Requests for proposals shall be publicized. All evaluation factors shall be identified along with their relative importance.

(2) Proposals shall be solicited from an adequate number of qualified sources.

- (3) RPTAs or RTAs shall have a method in place for conducting technical evaluations of proposals received and selecting awardees, with the goal of promoting fairness and competition without requiring strict adherence to specifications or price in determining the most advantageous proposal.
- (4) The award may be based upon initial proposals without further discussion or negotiation or, in the discretion of the evaluators, discussions or negotiations may be conducted either with all offerors or with those offerors determined to be within the competitive range, and one or more revised proposals or a best and final offer may be requested of all remaining offerors. The details and deficiencies of an offeror's proposal may not be disclosed to other offerors during any period of negotiation or discussion.
- (5) The award shall be made to the responsible firm whose proposal is most advantageous to the RPTA's or the RTA's program with price and other factors considered.

The contents of the proposals shall not be public records until 14 days before the award of the contract.

The board or governing body of the RPTA or the RTA shall, at the regularly scheduled meeting, by formal motion make findings of fact that the procurement by competitive proposal (Request for Proposals) method of procuring the particular apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment is the most appropriate acquisition method prior to the issuance of the requests for proposals and shall by formal motion certify that the requirements of this subsection have been followed before approving the contract.

Nothing in this subsection subjects a procurement by competitive proposal under this subsection to G.S. 143-49, 143-52, or 143-53.

RPTAs and RTAs may adopt regulations to implement this subsection.

(i) Procedure for Letting of Public Contracts. – The Department of Transportation ("DOT") and the Department of Administration ("DOA") shall monitor all projects in those agencies that are let without a performance or payment bond to determine the number of defaults on those projects, the cost to complete each defaulted project, and each project's contract price. Beginning March 1, 2011, and annually thereafter, DOT and DOA shall report this information to the Joint Legislative Committee on Governmental Operations.

(j) [Use of E-Verify Required. –] No contract subject to this section may be awarded by any board or governing body of the State, institution of State government, or any political subdivision of the State unless the contractor and the contractor's subcontractors comply with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the General Statutes. (1931, c. 338, s. 1; 1933, c. 50; c. 400, s. 1; 1937, c. 355; 1945, c. 144; 1949, c. 257; 1951, c. 1104, ss. 1, 2; 1953, c. 1268; 1955, c. 1049; 1957, c. 269, s. 3; c. 391; c. 862, ss. 1-4; 1959, c. 392, s. 1; c. 910, s. 1; 1961, c. 1226; 1965, c. 841, s. 2; 1967, c. 860; 1971, c. 847; 1973, c. 1194, s. 2; 1975, c. 879, s. 46; 1977, c. 619, ss. 1, 2; 1979, c. 182, s. 1; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1081; 1981, c. 346, s. 1; c. 754, s. 1; 1985, c. 145, ss. 1, 2; 1987, c. 590; 1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1108, ss. 7, 8; 1989, c. 350; 1993, c. 539, s. 1007; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 1995, c. 367, s. 6; 1997-174, ss. 1-4; 1998-185, s. 1; 1998-217, s. 16; 2001-328, s. 1; 2001-487, s. 88; 2001-496, ss. 4, 5; 2005-227, s. 1; 2006-232, s. 2; 2007-94, s. 1; 2007-322, s. 4; 2007-446, s. 6; 2010-148, s. 1.2; 2011-234, s. 1; 2013-418, s. 2(c); 2015-241, s. 7A.4(s); 2017-81, s. 1; 2021-80, s. 2.8.)