

# 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, March 11, 2024**  
**1014 MAIN STREET**  
**DANBURY, NC 27016**  
**6:00 PM**

**Call to Order**

**Invocation**

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**I. Approval of the Agenda**

**II. Public Comments**

**III. Comments - Managers/Commissioners**

**IV. Conflicts Of Interest**

**V. Consent Agenda**

- a. Minutes**
- b. Budget Amendments**
- c. Tax Office Items for Approval**

**VI. Information Agenda**

- a. Stokes County Annual Report 2023**
- b. Stokes County Community Video Tour Presentation**

**VII. Discussion Agenda**

- a. Stokes County Health Department Fee Increase Request**
- b. Demolition at 1075 Dodgetown Road**
- c. Verizon Booth Mountain Tower Lease**
- d. Letter of Engagement for Womble Bond Dickinson**
- e. Resolution Declaring the Intent to Sell, Lease, or Convey Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital**

**f. Danbury Planning and Zoning Board ET J Appointment**

**VIII. Action Agenda**

- a. Approval of Amended Administrative Contracts**
- b. Proclamation Recognizing Frances Carroll's 100th Birthday**
- c. Stokes County Health Department Fee Increase Request**
- d. Letter of Engagement for Womble Bond Dickinson**
- e. Resolution Declaring the Intent to Sell, Lease, or Convey Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital**

**IX. Closed Session**

**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**  
**March 11, 2024**  
**6:00 PM**

**Item number: V.a.**

**Minutes**

Contact: Interim Manager/Clerk to the Board Amber Brown

Summary:

Minutes for Approval:

- February 26, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
February 26, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes	3/9/2024	Cover Memo

**STATE OF NORTH  
CAROLINA  
  
COUNTY OF STOKES**

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**OFFICE OF THE  
COMMISSIONERS  
STOKES COUNTY  
GOVERNMENT  
DANBURY, NORTH  
CAROLINA  
MONDAY FEBRUARY 26, 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, February 26, 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 Cox 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 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 unanimously.

### **Public Comments**

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for public comments.



The following spoke during public comments:

**Sally Knox**

1107 Manring Road

Lawsonville, NC

Re: **Schools**

Ms. Knox donated her time for public comments to Glenn Knox.

**Glenn Knox**

1107 Manring Road

Lawsonville, NC

Re: **School and Other**

Mr. Knox presented the following comments:

- First and foremost, I would like to thank everyone again for saving my life, Scott Aaron, Brandon Gentry, Renee Bridges, Wayne Barneycastle – all of them helped save my life – if it wasn't for all of you, I would not be here today and would sure not be in any condition to come talk today
- Provided Board members with a handout
- The first thing that I wanted to talk about was something that I did not have the chance to print out
- I am kind of disturbed about something that I would like an answer to and that is these little flyers that come in the mail – they cut down people on one side and promote people on the other side
  - It is USPS permit number #393 and that is the same permit number that you guys used on your flyer that you sent out
  - Would like to know who the PAC is that is responsible for it and who is funding it
  - I think it would be nice for everyone to know
- On the handout that I gave you, is a copy of the public notice that Amber sent out, I want you to read something with me and that is – the Board of Commissioners will consider adopting a resolution declaring the intent to sell, lease, or convey
- Now, convey sounds to me like give and I would like to know who that is going to be
- Obviously, there was an intention to give it to somebody because I don't know why you would use a word like convey in a sentence like this unless you intent that or other than that you are going to sell or lease it, I would hope, it is worth a lot of money
- I would like to know that as well, I think the citizens would too
- Now to the heart of the matter
- On page 2 of what I gave you, what we need to add to our school system
  - Sally and I grew up in Armstrong County, PA
  - In Armstrong County, PA, there is a school system that has one school that is called Lenape Vo Tech
  - If you are going to do something with the school system regarding the closed schools, I am not here to tell you what is best on that, I am not an expert in any of that
  - What I am an expert at is what a Vo Tech would do for the trades in this county and how we would be able to get our kids trained on stuff like automotive technology, biomedical, collision repair, computer information – all these kinds of things that I have listed are available at Lenape Vo Tech
  - Sally took sales and I took electronic technology – they have merged both of ours into different categories now
  - Law enforcement and information technology are stuff that kids coming out of school can get jobs doing
  - If you going to change the school system and you are going to close a school or two, would you consider investing money into something like this

- Because our kids do not have to go to school for an arts degree, what the heck are they going to do with that anyway
- When they get a trade, they can get a job
- Guess what, have you tried to hire a plumber lately
- There are not as many as there used to be, why, because people are getting out of it because everyone is driving them to go to college
- We need plumbers
- We need people who can put in air conditioning/heating systems
- They have got to be out there
- I would like to recommend to this County that you guys take an initiative and start looking at something like this
- I would invite you to go out to Lenape's website (included the address on the information provided)
- I would also recommend traveling up there and visiting the place, it is gorgeous
- Walk through that place and you will be astounded at what they are teaching these kids
- There is a full auto body shop there – they teach them from the ground up
- I have seen them take cars that I would have sent to the junkyard, coming out, they were gorgeous, running like a kitten
- I would really like you to consider doing something like this in our county
- I think it would be a very big benefit to the kids, to the county itself
- Would be happy to answer any questions
- Thank you again for listening

**Sarvasri Ananda**

1060 Tyler Road  
Walnut Cove, NC

**Re: Information**

Mr. Sarvasri Ananda presented the following comments:

- I will endorse what he just said
- Don't know if any of you have seen Elon Musk speak recently saying that you don't need a college education, you need to be able to do stuff – very interesting
- I have a degree in engineering physics and a broad background in natural healthcare, have been practicing for 53 years
- Just turned 78 years old
- Just wanted to pass on some information
- I used to come to every commissioners' meeting for probably 8-10 years where I presented presentations
- I have brought each of you a copy of all those selected presentations
- If we look around a little bit, we notice that things are kind of weird these days
- People are saying that we are coming up on the end times
- There are exactly two cycles that I understand that we are coming into:
  - One is the end of a 12,000-year cycle
  - The other one is the end to a 240-million-year cycle which is one revolution of the galaxy
- Things are going to be changing a lot for the better or the worse depending upon where you are situated
- I wanted to promote the idea of pushing for things happening for the better
- This is a great opportunity to make a huge transformation in consciousness and in health
- Create a new society, really a new earth
- The presentations that I used to make were to make Stokes County the happiest, healthiest, greenest county in the nation
- Recently, I have been studying a lot in natural agricultural and how we can restore the soils

- We need to restore the soils
- We need to create a healthy food system
- It turns out that our food system as it is does not have the nutritional density that it should
- In fact, this is one of the primary causes of all our psychological and health problems
- We don't have the nutrient that we should have
- It is possible to grow food that has as much as 200 times more nutrient than currently exists
- Carrots for instead have been grown with 200 times the nutrient of the typical carrot that you can buy in the store
- My wife and I used to travel and select from the stores and from the farmers' market everything that could be bought and bring it home and test it with a Bix refractometer to determine if it was any good
- In the handout that you will be getting with all the presentations that I have made before, there is a page that talks about how food can be tested and how food can be grown much more healthier than it is today
- We can grow without pesticides, without herbicides and if we do it properly, farmers will make a lot more money because they are spending way too much money on amendments that would not be needed if we approve the soil
- We can rebuild the soil in one to three years to make our soil really, really productive
- This will help the farmers and Stokes County
- Just wanted to pass along to you that we need to start taking steps now that can really practically make Stokes County just really shine with the people in Stokes County becoming much healthier than they are now
- If I do it right, I might live to 125 or 150, it is possible
- The oldest person I know is around 250
- Got to run on, I have some work that I have to do
- Thank you for your time

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 Cox commented:

- Thank you all for being here today and to those watching online
- Glenn, as far as your comments, I don't know the answer to anything that you asked, so I can't help you with any of that
- I don't think we are going to give the hospital away to anybody
- We haven't talked about giving it away, so just FYI, think it is safe, don't know if that is just legal language that was used to cover all the bases, I guess
- Glad to see you here and doing better – sure have sent up a lot of prayers for you
- If you don't mind, one of the things on my list to talk about and to get more information about which you could probably help Amber with is where we left off and were looking at the cell tower coverage especially around Sandy Ridge
- I have been talking with people while campaigning – they told me about an incident that happened out there where a girl from Guilford County was going to commit suicide, she was out riding around and going to jump off a bridge in Guilford County and couldn't find a good place to pull off her car not that I would think that would matter
- She was going to call the suicide hotline but could not get any service in Sandy Ridge, she was out of gas, she had a knife in her lap under her hoodie when they got her out of the car, she did manage to call 911 and they did send someone over there
- Just don't think about those things, there are areas in our county where people can't call the suicide hotline

- Think most areas can call 911 but there is still a problem
- I know that you were doing a great job checking into some of that for us, we don't need to let that ball drop
- We need to keep moving forward with it
- While I have a minute, another area of concern, that I will just throw out there, as a Board, you read all this stuff and you don't know what to believe about some of China's capability and taking out the PowerGrid and different things
- May have to do this in closed session with Emergency Management – not sure that they would want to discuss any plan in open session, I would like to know how prepared we are if an attack like that happens
- If all the electronics get fried, not just the power goes out, the computers and phones don't work, some vehicles don't work, what are we going to do

Glenn Knox received permission so that he could address Commissioner Cox's comments.

Mr. Knox presented the following comments:

- Regarding the cell phones towers, the folks that I was talking with have occasionally checked in with me
- They have realized that I am not doing this anymore, so I don't have any idea who else is doing this now
- As far as the Emergency Management, you don't have to worry about nuclear weapons, you have to worry about Electromagnetic Pulses (EMPs) that will fry every electronic whether it is plugged in or not
- You need to be prepared for that; I am not sure the County is
- That is called a Faraday cage, that is what needs to be put in

Commissioner Cox continued:

- We will be discussing that further with the appropriate people, thank you for that information
- Want to wish all the high school basketball teams starting state playoffs this week – good luck to all of them
- That is all for me

Vice Chairman Wood commented:

- Thanks for everyone coming out
- Thanks to those watching on YouTube, it is amazing how many people mention to me about seeing me on YouTube, did not know that I would be a superstar one day
- Glenn, trades, that is 100%
- I could start a war, but I am not – going to be nice
- I am just going to be nice, but I will say this, there are kids in this County that have graduated high school that don't know that Forsyth Tech has a campus at Meadows
- That disturbs me greatly
- Parents and teachers wake up – steer these kids into the trades, they can make more than a doctor
- The sky is the limit
- That is all I have to say

Commissioner Morris commented:

- In regard to Glenn's comments, I don't know anything about the flyers other than, if they are legal, they should have names on the bottom of who paid for them – contact those people they should be able to answer your questions
- Under no circumstances would I ever vote to give the hospital away, I think, going from

memory, it is NC General Statute 131e-13(d), I think if you look at that statute, it tells us this is the language that we have to do use regarding what we are getting ready to do

- In this context, I think the language “convey” is talking about assigning the lease to somebody – just guessing – believe if you read that statute, I think it will clarify that for you

Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown added the language was directly taken from that statute.

Commissioner Morris continued:

- Agree with the technical aspect you mentioned, will definitely pass this on to the Board of Education, think we are all open to getting more trades into the school, good thoughts on your part
- Recently spoke with NC Department of Transportation District Engineer Pat Ivey about the Highway 89 Closure:
  - He stated that they had the design work completed
  - Would be going through the required solicitation process to pick a contractor which will probably be done by spring
  - Once the bid is awarded, it would probably take between 6-8 weeks for project to be done
  - Probably looking at mid-summer before the road is opened
- Have heard some comments around the neighborhood about public comments from various governing bodies and so forth
- I think since I have been with the County as either the manager or commissioner, I think we have tried to have public comments at just about every meeting that we have, not sure about the budget work sessions

Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown added:

- We do not have public comments at the budget work sessions, but we do have a public hearing specifically for the budget

Commissioner Morris continued:

- I thought budget work sessions were the only ones that we don't have public comments
- The statute only requires the Board to have public comments at one meeting per month
- My personal opinion, I think it is probably shared by the other Board members, is that we do this because we want to hear from the public, whether we like what they are saying or we don't like – agree or don't agree, it is irrelevant
- We want to give them an opportunity to give us feedback
- To me that is part of transparency that we want to have with our local government and the citizens
- As long as I have a vote on it, we will have public comments every opportunity we get to give people a chance to communicate with us and communicate on the camera with the public so those guys can hear what you are telling us
- Welcome to the meeting today and to those watching online – sparse group today – hoping there are some online watching today
- Appreciate everyone's participation in our local government

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Always want to start off by thanking everyone that is here today
- As Commissioner Morris mentioned, don't have as many as usual, but for the ones that are here today, thank you
- Also thank you to those watching on livestream, YouTube – there is more people that watch than you realize
- I often get calls from people who weren't at the meeting but watching the meeting on

livestream

- I think it is very important that everybody in this County takes part and participates in our governmental process; it is very important to me because they are our constituents, and we need to hear what they are thinking
- As far as the trades go, I am 100% behind that
- When you talk about plumbing, just had to hire a plumber to come over which took two months for him to work it into his schedule, if people think that someone who works in the trades can't make good money, they have not had to have anything done lately
- I am just being upfront and that is great
- If we don't have people that can do jobs like that, a lot of people do not want to do jobs like that, I have had a lot of brick masonry work done, only know of one person in the County that does that work – he does all my brick work
- It is ashamed that everyone in the County does not know that we have a trades facility located on the Forsyth Tech Campus at Meadows – beside the Early College
- Did not take trades when I was attending school, when I have a job that I can't do and have to pay someone else to do it, I wished then that I had taken some of the trade courses that was offered when I attended South Stokes High School
- Reiterated that I am 100% behind emphasizing trades, the future job market is going to have more and more of the trades in it
- At the last meeting, I encouraged everyone to get out and vote because that is one of your freedoms that you have – I think Vice Chairman Wood echoed the importance of getting out to vote
- I am not up here to tell you who to vote for, I will never tell someone who to vote for, but I do encourage you to get out and vote
- Two of my sons fought in Afghanistan and my dad fought in the Korea – they did that to help us keep our freedoms – one being the right to vote
- Please, to all the people in the County, get out and vote, you have a few days left of early voting and the main voting day, Tuesday, March 5<sup>th</sup>
- I would be at a poll just watching even though I am not running this year, but my wife has medical procedures scheduled for that day, so I will be at the hospital that day
- Would like to recognize an individual today, we have recognized a lot of groups in my eight years as being a county commissioner in all sorts of ways whether it was academically or athletic – think as Commissioner Cox stated that our high school basketball teams are starting playoffs this week
- I have watched a lot of games and believe that South Stokes has a very good team this year
- I want to brag and throw this in, during my second year as principal at North Stokes High School, our 1A Men's Basketball Team made it to the state championship game and played at the Dean Smith Center – they came in second – exciting time for all those involved
- I want to recognize someone that used to teach at North Stokes and was also the tennis coach at North for a very long time – that is Julian McKenzie (Mac)
- Mac coached tennis for me five out of the seven years that I was at North Stokes High School
- The North Carolina High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame will induct Julian McKenzie into the NC High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame in August of this year
  - Just want to read a few things about Julian
  - Julian “Mac” McKenzie is a beloved coach from North Stokes High School who has been instrumental in the lives of many students and student-athletes. Coach McKenzie is widely known for being the first guidance counselor and assistant football coach at North Stokes High School when the school opened in 1964. In 1981, McKenzie started the North Stokes High School girl's tennis program, which he coached for 32 out of the next 34 years, being named Conference Coach of the Year 17 times. He also won Conference Coach of the Year two more times during his time as the girls'

basketball coach. Across his 48 years of coaching, McKenzie's teams became highly decorated with 20 conference championships, 12 regional championships, and seven state championships. Awards won by his players include 69 All-Conference performers, 12 Conference Players of the Year, eight state champions, and four All-Northwest performers. McKenzie helped to support and mold numerous lives of young students in his time as a counselor and coach and continues to mentor and coach even after retiring.

- The North Carolina High School Athletic Association Hall of Fame will honor the eight individuals being inducted with a private reception in April and will be officially inducted into the Hall of Fame on August 17<sup>th</sup> at the Embassy Suite in Cary
- Just want to personally say to Mac – Congratulations Mac
- That is all for today

Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown commented:

- Just want to say welcome to everyone here today and to those watching online
- Thank you for being here
- Just want to reiterate that the language for the public notice was taken directly from that general statute
- Will be happy to provide the link to that statute to anyone, just need to let me know

Chairman Chandler commented:

- Welcome everyone to the meeting today, whether it be on YouTube or in person
- I agree with you, Glenn, on the technology 150%
- I believe there is pretty much a mass agreement with that including the school board members, been attending the forums and hearing that
- Believe you are on to something, do think it is nice to have a place that we can referred to that is actually working
- Confirmed with Glenn that the place mentioned has a 45-year-old track record
- That is something that we definitely need to look at, thank you for bringing it do our attention

With no other comments, Chairman Chandler closed the commissioners/manager comments section of today's meeting.

### **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

Audit Contract for Martin Starnes & Associates

Chairman Chandler entertained a motion to approve the consent agenda which included minutes, budget amendments, and Audit Contract for Martin Starnes & Associates for Fiscal Year 2023/24.

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

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

Commissioner Morris requested Finance Director Lankford or Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown to explain the additional funding needed in Budget Amendment #51 for Fiscal Year 2022-23 audit services.

Finance Director Lankford responded:

- The current contract fee is for up to three (3) major programs, this past year, we had eight (8) major programs (a major program is anything over \$700,000 threshold being state or federal)
- For any major program over three (3), we are charged \$3,500.00 for each program
- Some of this is unknown until the audit is done

Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown added:

- When we do our budget, we do not know exact funding such as from the state, grants, (that state budget is approved after our budget)
- County received different grants for fire departments, emergency management, Sewer/Water Authority which played a role in increasing the number of major programs

Finance Director Lankford continued:

- This is the last year of the three-year contract that is also on the consent agenda
- The total fee includes 10 major programs – if the entire amount is not used, remaining funding allocated will fall back into fund balance
- Making sure we budget enough for the upcoming fiscal year to alleviate having to do another budget amendment again

Commissioner Morris noted that this could be talked about further, if needed, during the budget work sessions.

With no further 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.

### **Vaya Health Update**

Chairman Chandler turned the floor over to Vaya Regional Director of Community Relations Cara Townsend Dohner for the Vaya Health Update. (presented a power point presentation – data information can be obtained from the Clerk to the Board)

Director Cara Townsend Dohner presented the following update:

- Vaya now has 32 counties in the catchment area – just awarded Rockingham County
- A lot going on in the behavior health world – very busy
- Excited to give you an update on how the County is doing – data wise
- Just to let everyone know – Vaya Health is one of the managed care organizations (MCO) across the state
- Vaya manages Medicaid for the state of North Carolina, in essence, we hire providers to



provide that care

- Vaya has been around about 50 years
- There are five managed care organizations across the state that serve various counties
- We have innovation slots that is a statewide program that allots family members approximately \$120,000 a year to provide care for their members who would otherwise possibly be in an institution
  - Know that \$120,000 does sound expensive, a person who would otherwise have to be institutionalized would cost more than double that amount and is not always the best environment for the client – there is currently a waiting list
  - We are constantly trying to get people out of institutionalized care so each year the state allots us about 27 slots to try to get people out in a private setting which is great because we can surround them with care managers so that they can succeed
  - Often time, we can take slots from other MCOs that are not being utilized to give more people a chance to live outside of an institution
- Care management is something that all our members can take advantage of – not everyone takes advantage of that
- Care managers provide care, directing them on the appropriate services, making sure they get assessments to make sure they understand what they are dealing with
- County has low numbers regarding clients being admitted and readmitted to the hospital – good numbers for the County
- Emergency room visits and readmissions to the emergency room are also low – numbers do fluctuate at times
- Try to divert people from the emergency rooms because they often get stuck there for a while – not always having the appropriate providers there – try to branch them off to more of a walk-in center environment
- Mobile Crisis – walk in center – different aspect of the care that is provided
- The state can provide care to anyone who has a crisis – we provide care to Medicaid members only but do have some ability to care for other people who have no insurance
- Vaya is right in the mix of Medicaid Expansion – currently working with state
- Effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, we will be under Tailored Plan Care Management – currently Blue Cross and Blue Shield plans only serve people across NC with physical health with Vaya serving the people in the mental health world
- The state has decided that we need to have whole person care
- As of July 1<sup>st</sup>, we will be caring for people's physical health as well as having a pharmacy benefit
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield will be caring for people with mental health illness and also pharmacy
- Vaya will still care for the most acute patients
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield will see patients with ADHD, anxiety – we will have the most severe cases – important for you to know going forward
- Community hospital inpatient for substance use disorders is pretty low for the county
- Walkin Center – try to gear clients to the Walkin Center which offers better care, faster – better for most patients – try to triage people (to determine whether they are urgent or emergent) within fifteen minutes when they enter the center with emergent patients (such as suicidal) being seen immediately – urgent patients would be someone who needs their medicine refilled quickly (between 24-48 hours)

Commissioner Cox confirmed with Director Dohner that Daymark is the only Walkin Center in the County.

Director Dohner continued the update:

- Daymark is opened Monday-Friday (8:00am-5:00pm)
- Mobile Crisis Management – do not have any data regarding people being assessed in the mobile crisis management in the last quarter
  - This tells me that people do not know that it exists
  - Wanted to make sure that everyone knows there is a 24-hour crisis line that is available to anyone – this line can even be used if a student is being bullied at school and feels the need to take drastic measures, student who is suicidal
  - The number is 1-866-275-9552 – suicidal prevention line - dial 988
  - Want to make sure people know about services that are available
- Facility based crisis centers – no admits – that is likely a testament to your awesome Department of Social Services here in the County – they do a great job
- Be happy to answer any questions

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

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Questioned Director Dohner on a scale of 1-10, how is Stokes County doing compared to other counties like ours

Director Dohner responded:

- Believe the County is doing well
- Alamance County is the one that comes to mind which probably had 25 assessments in the last quarter – just throwing a number out there
- Getting that number for the mobile crisis management out into the community would be a good idea – putting on county website explaining about what the number is here for
- Mobile Crisis works with both the Walkin Center and law enforcement which helps people from going to the emergency room

Vice Chairman Wood confirmed with Director Dohner that she feels it is everyone's job to get this number out, so people know it is there if they need to call someone.

Commissioner Cox commented:

- I know Department of Social Services has this number and feel sure the Health Department does as well
- Community Paramedic Program also should have it
- They should all be providing this number to those who need it
- Not sure why it is not being utilized or why people don't know about it
- For a while there, I did not think the County had assess to a mobile crisis, who responds to it if it is 24/7

Director Dohner responded:

- Law enforcement responds
- Even though it shows there was none, there were some calls, but the report only shows if there was an assessment done, there were no assessments done in the County
- Do know, referring back to Commissioner Morris' question, there has been times when Caswell County also showed none also

Commissioner Cox continued:

- What is disconcerting about it is, just from working the election polls this past week talking with different people, I know within five weeks, we had five suicides with a couple of those being young people – know that one was 19 years old with some of the others being young people

- It is a problem
- Mental Health and lack of mental health availability to care are problems in our county - maybe it is a lack of people knowing that there is somewhere to get the care they need
- As I have been campaigning, I have talked a lot about how we need to do a better job at getting people connected to the resources that are available
- I am not saying that there are no resources but obviously people think that there are none
- Our County used to lead the state in suicide numbers, probably still close to the top of the list
- People just don't know what is available I guess and are just not asking for help

Director Dohner responded:

- Maybe getting the school board involved by pushing this number out to the parents, feel that parents just do not know where to get help that is available

Vice Chairman Wood noted that this number needs to be posted in the schools.

Director Dohner continued:

- Agree with Vice Chairman Wood – a campaign to get these numbers out there
- Getting ready to open a new behavioral (24/7 facility) center in Alamance County in June, working on a big campaign formulated on educating the public on what a mental health crisis really is – there is such a stigma, and it has so many aspects of it
- It is all in the schools – what is substance abuse, what do you do about it, what are the signs of your child having a mental health crisis, don't think a lot of parents would know the answers
- We can work with the County on a campaign

Commissioner Cox commented:

- Know that the school system has a new person that deals with behavioral mental issues within the schools – need to get them involved
- This number should be in every bathroom of every middle/high school in Stokes County so students know that they can call someone
- We could get this out on the County's Facebook page
- Will be happy to work with Amber regarding getting this number out in the public

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Requested Director Dohner to expand a little more on the change with Blue Cross and Blue Shield that is coming July 1<sup>st</sup> – Tailored Care Management – what is the impact of doing this – will it make it easier for the person to get the prescriptions that they need for mental health

Director Dohner responded:

- The goal is to have wrap around care
- You will have one organization that handles mental health, physical health, and prescriptions
- This is a large endeavor – we have already hired a pharmacist to start training staff across the state
- There have already been 4 delays from the state in pushing this service out – hopefully it will happen in July – Vaya is ready
- Believe this will be a good thing

Commissioner Morris also questioned if patients needing services have transportation issues getting to appointments.

Director Dohner responded:

- Transportation is part of the Medicaid benefit, with Medicaid Expansion, people should be able to get more transportation – starting to have meetings to find out all the transportation sources within the County
- That should be an enhancement benefit with the Tailored Care Management

Commissioner Morris noted that DSS Director Elmes should be able to help regarding transportation services available in Stokes County.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Don't really have any questions
- This is really good information not only for the commissioners, but for the Board of Education, for the towns/municipalities and their boards/councils
- Requested Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown to see that the City of King, Town of Danbury, and Town of Walnut Cove gets a copy of the power point presentation
- Know that Department of Social Services and Director Elmes have been doing an excellent job helping with these issues
- As Commissioner Cox stated, at one time, we were the number one county in the state in suicide deaths – that is not a positive but a negative
- That being very tough to take
- Currently not the number one but still in the upper area
- Communication is very important
- Transportation, as Commissioner Morris mentioned, has always been an issue with people needing services – glad to hear that you are working on that
- We have got to remove the stigma of asking for help – it is there
- People who need help are usually the ones that will not ask for help – they need help
- It is in the schools and out in the community
- Believe, not only the commissioners, but any group that deals with mental health issues, needs to work closely with Vaya so that we can see positive improvements
- Reiterated how important communication is
- Appreciate you providing the information to the Board today

Director Dohner responded:

- When you see elementary school students committing suicide, we need to find out why and be more involved – getting those in need the resources – there are resources out there
- Agree, pushing them out to the community is the challenge

Vice Chairman Wood noted a good report.

Commissioner Cox added:

- I think the admissions being low is a bit misleading probably, I don't think that equates to the need being low
- I think the need is high and people are just not getting to the resources they need or don't know about – the stigma is there that prevents a lot of people from seeking help, unfortunately
- I do feel with Medicaid Expansion, maybe we will be able to catch a lot of people who have not been able to receive the needed care

Director Dohner commented:

- Not sure if any of you saw the hearing where social media companies testified before Congress about a month ago – most of them having to be subpoenaed and a hand full of them put in protections for the kids a week before they testified
- They reported pulling 650,000 drug dealers off of Snapchat, 100,000 cases a day reported of

exploitation of kids, 20,000 cases a day reported for sextortion – this is all connected to mental health and substance use – think we all have a big battle

- Very excited to work with Stokes County

Chairman Chandler commented:

- Very important to get briefings like this
- Very important to hear about things such as the crisis line not being utilized
- This helps bring out the awareness level of the program – appreciate this being brought out in the report – know some reports don't include things that are not great such as the crisis line not being utilized
- Excellent report

Commissioner Cox added:

- Wonder if some people don't use that mobile crisis hotline number because a lot of the time depending on where the crisis is, they don't want law enforcement, if that is who goes out, they are not trained mental health people
- I am sure they deal with mental health issues and know who to call
- Maybe when we get our peer support specialist up and going, they could be sent out with law enforcement if it is a substance use issue and not just a mental health issue
- Believe we need more resources to send out in a crisis like that other than just law enforcement

Director Dohner responded:

- While the Walkin Center is great (8:00am to 5:00pm), most crisis do not normally happen during that time frame

Commissioner Cox added:

- Maybe we can work on this in the Substance Use and Treatment Committee – discuss more resources
- We need to work with the school system - brainstorm

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

## **Sales Tax Update**

Chairman Chandler turned the floor over to Finance Director Lisa Lankford for the Sales Tax Update. (sales tax data information regarding Fiscal Year 2023-24 included on the agenda can be obtained from the county website (February 26<sup>th</sup> agenda), finance director, or clerk to the board)

Finance Director Lisa Lankford presented the following sales tax update (July-December 2023):

- Sales tax revenue received in September and October 2023 (compared to September and October 2022) show a decrease which you immediately think the economy – people not spending as much money but there are other variables that can contribute to a decrease
- In speaking with NC Association of County Commissioners staff, Johanna Sharp, the decrease could be contributed to refunds being requested by nonprofit organizations
- In September 2022 refunds requested were \$169,000 compared to September 2023 being \$240,000 – same thing happened in October – refunds increased in October 2023
- Ms. Sharp also noted that sales that happened in January and taxes collected in February with a close out in March with the County getting their distribution in April – this is now being 90 days instead of 60 days

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

Commissioner Morris noted the latest sales tax update would help for budget work sessions – to make a projection of sales tax revenue.

Chairman Chandler expressed the Board’s appreciation for the sales tax update.

## 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 February 26<sup>th</sup> agenda or from Tax Administrator Brim)

- January 2024 Report
  - Tax Collections Status Report for FY 2023-2024
    - Have collected approximately 96.35% of the budget
    - Should be able to meet the goal of 100% by the end of the fiscal year
    - Currently about \$832,000 ahead compared to this time last year for the county and school operating collections
- Real and Personal Releases less than \$100.00
  - Five (5) accounts totaling \$376.90
- Real and Personal Releases more than \$100.00
  - One (1) account totaling \$4,698.53
- Real and Personal Refunds more than \$100.00
  - Two (2) accounts totaling \$361.56
- Advertisement of 2023 Tax Liens:

#### As of February 1, 2024

Delinquent 2023 Tax Bills	# of Bills	Principal Due
General County	3383	\$760,388.18
Schools Operating Expense	3383	\$683,126.82
Education Fund	3383	\$93,129.92
Town of Danbury	6	\$1,415.34
City of King	180	\$108,943.86
Town of Walnut Cove	113	\$28,897.77
King Fire District	292	\$19,289.81
Rural Hall Fire District	99	\$5,748.92
County Service Fire District	2312	\$116,118.24
Walnut Cove Fire District	387	\$20,779.68
<b>Total Bills Delinquent</b>	<b>3383</b>	<b>\$1,837,838.54</b>

- NCGS 105-369(a) – In February of each year, the tax collector must report to the governing body the total amount of unpaid taxes for the current fiscal year that are liens on real property....
- NCGS 105-369(b1) – After the governing body orders the tax collector to advertise the tax

liens, the tax collector must send a notice to the record owner of each affected parcel of the property, as determined as of the date the taxes became delinquent. The notice must be sent to the owner's last known address by first-class mail at least 30 days before the date of advertisement is to be published

- Projected date for the mailing of second notices is March 1, 2024
- Requesting the governing body order the tax collector to advertise these unpaid accounts no earlier than 30 days after the mailing of past due notice (less any bills paid between the report date and the advertising date)
- Projected date for the publication of the 2023 tax liens in The Stokes News is June 27, 2024
- 2024 Board of Equalization and Review Dates
  - Proposed hearing dates for the 2024 Board of Equalization and Review:
    - Monday, April 15, 2024 – 6:00 pm
    - Monday, May 6, 2024 – 2:00 pm
  - Have confirmed with Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown that these dates do not conflict with any Board meetings already scheduled
- Request the following be moved to the March 11, 2024 consent agenda:
  - Real and Personal Releases more than \$100.00
  - Real and Personal Refunds more than \$100.00
  - Advertisement of the 2023 Tax Liens
  - Approval of 2024 Board of Equalization and Review Dates
- Would also like to invite the Board, those in attendance today, anyone watching (all citizens) to a meeting in Sandy Ridge at the Northeast Stokes Fire Department tomorrow (February 27<sup>th</sup>) at 2:00 pm
  - The Tax Department, Register of Deeds, and Economic Development Tourism have been invited to Sandy Ridge by King Senior Center Coordinator Paula Hall
  - Was in King last week – had good attendance – a lot of good questions
  - Topics focused on:
    - Register of Deeds – Property Fraud Program
    - Tax Department – County Re-evaluation, Exemption Programs
    - Tourism – Area Activities in Stokes County
  - On March 12<sup>th</sup>, will be at the Walnut Cove Center Senior at 10:30 am
  - Want to commend Senior Center Coordinators Paula Hall and Reba Dodson for all the hard work they do for the seniors in Stokes County
  - Would encourage anyone over the age of 55 to check out the senior centers
- Happy to answer any questions

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

Commissioner Morris confirmed with Tax Administrator Brim that the delinquent amount for 2022 was \$1,728,000 compared to \$1,837,838 for 2023.

Tax Administrator Brim noted:

- The report was generated on February 15<sup>th</sup> last year and the report for this year was run on February 1<sup>st</sup> – there could have been a lot of payments during that two-week timeframe

Chairman Chandler, with full consensus of the Board, directed Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown to place the Real/Personal Releases/Refunds more than \$100, Advertisement of the 2023 Tax Liens, and 2024 Board of Equalization and Review Dates on the March 11<sup>th</sup> consent agenda.

### **Offer for Surplus Tax Foreclosed Property**

Chairman Chandler turned the floor over to Purchasing/Project Manager Glenda Pruitt for the Offer for Surplus Tax Foreclosed Property.

Purchasing/Project Manager Glenda Pruitt presented the following information regarding the Offer for Surplus Tax Foreclosed Property:

- The County has received the following offers from Devis Ronal Ulloa Medina with United Investment Properties LLC to purchase the following tax foreclosed surplus parcels:
  - **Parcel #5996-00-10-7059**
    - DB/PG 770/2429
    - Merridon Drive, Pinnacle, NC 27043
    - Offer for the sum of \$3,500.00 for Lot 66
  - **Parcel #5996-00-19-7936**
    - DB/PG 770/2429
    - Merridon Drive, Pinnacle, NC 27043
    - Offer for the sum of \$3,350.00 for Lot 65
- Request the Board of Commissioners give consensus to start the upset bid process “only” as outlined in NCGS 160A-269
- Tax Administrator Brim has confirmed that he feels this is an acceptable offer for the purchase, agree with Tax Administrator Brim
- Advertisement will be placed in the Stokes News along with being posted on the county web page
- After the required 10-day window of not receiving any upset bid, the item will be placed back on the agenda for final approval

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

The Board had no issues or concerns with starting the upset bid process.

There was full consensus from the Board to start the upset bid process.

Chairman Chandler, with full consensus of the Board, directed Purchasing/Project Manager Pruitt to start the upset bid process as outlined in NCGS 160A-269.

Purchasing/Project Manager Pruitt noted the upset bid process will run in this week’s paper and also posted on the county website.

### **Budget Goals for FY 24/25**

Chairman Chandler opened the floor for the discussion of Budget Goals for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2024/25 Budget.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Would like to get back to at least a 20% Fund Balance if we can
  - Would also like for staff to be prepared to be able to let the Board know during the budget work sessions where the Fund Balance stands and what it would take to have at least a 20% Fund Balance (talking about the fund balance that Local Government Commission looks at with counties having to maintain an 8% Fund Balance)
  - Confirmed with Finance Director Lankford that this year’s fund balance which is higher than expected includes the American Plan Rescue Act (APRA) Funding that the County received
- School Budget
  - Hope to be able to work with the school board to get a consolidation plan that we all



- could agree on to facilitate what funding decisions we make for the school system
  - Believe the County's Financial Advisor, Doug Carter, has stated in order to be able to advise the commissioners on funding, the Board of Commissioners needs a five-year capital plan from the school system
  - Believe Advisor Carter has offered to even meet with the Board of Education
  - Just want to make sure that is facilitated so that the Board can make a good, informed decision for the school system funding
- Would like to continue the County's effort to build a new animal shelter in Meadows which I think that is underway – support continuing the current schedule the County is currently on
- Need to figure out the funding for the courthouse renovation project that was mandated – using the funding that has been allocated from the Legislature
- Want to have discussion on the hospital
  - As everyone is aware, we have some other moving parts going with the hospital
  - Along with that, we have some certain obligations in the County, especially, from a facility standpoint to keep the facility operational – think we have roof, HVAC, and possibly a few other requirements
  - Would like to address really close the hospital needs as we try to do whatever transition that we do with it
  - Also look at it from a little bit longer term perspective too – long term plans for the hospital and the satellite facilities
  - That discussion would primarily center around Danbury and King – don't think there are any major concerns with the Pine Hall facility and its operation
- Would like to have discussion regarding funding to incentivize new businesses that are wanting to open in the County
  - Probably along with that as a budgetary function, we need to figure out what the County's Economic Development organizational structure is going to be
  - Whether we are going to have an economic development director, whether we are going to have an economic development private/public partnership, exactly how we are going to proceed in the future to manage economic development in the County – looking at incentives
- As far as my goal for individual departments - it is going to be personnel and equipment as it always is primarily with them
  - Have some real challenges getting our fund balance back up and so forth
  - Need to take a real hard look at personnel and equipment requests from departments
  - Would say, especially on new personnel positions and reclassifications, they need to very well justified to get approve
  - Have no problem with departments putting their lists/requests in their budget request, but Amber will do cutting, and the Board will do cutting/additions to Amber's recommended budget for a final budget
  - If there is really a need, put it in the budget, but doesn't mean it will be approved
- Another area that we have effort underway but will require more discussion and more effort is to continue to upgrade our network especially with cyber threats and hackers that appear to be going on in other counties
  - Saw where a county in another state – their Sheriff's Department was talking about being hit by the Chinese 5-10 times a day
  - Want to make sure we provide resources for that to make sure there is no catastrophe with our network
  - Continue the efforts to do departmental software upgrades to make our operations more efficient – efforts are now underway with some departments – need to look at the status of those and make sure they are on schedule for completion
  - Look at what other areas regarding departmental software that needs upgrading
- Pay and turnover

- There always seems to be a vicious competition for employees especially in certain departments across the County
- Think we need to look at our pay scale
- One distinction that I would like to make over the way we have done it sometimes in the past – like it to be targeted to where we have turnover issues – especially those departments that constantly are competing with surrounding counties and so forth
- Target the pay discussion to where there is a problem
- If we have departments that have no turnover ever, that might be an indication that the pay maybe okay – that could be one metric that you could look at
- Bottom line, if we have a department that is bleeding people, and we give them some kind of pay increase to try to stabilize that department, that does not mean the entire County gets a pay increase, that is the way I look at it
- Needs to be on a case-by-case basis, just affordability as much as anything
- Especially regarding personnel changes, additions, and so forth, make sure that departments have a very strong justification
- Don't think we will approve anything that does not have data driven; fact-based justification needed to make those decisions
- That is all for me

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Commissioner Morris discussed a lot of mine that I had put on two pages
- My first was to continue working toward our 2035 Comprehensive Plan
- As much as possible, try to be competitive with other surrounding counties (like size - similar counties to us) for our employees regarding salaries and benefits as Commissioner Morris already mentioned is a battle with other counties
- Continuous improvement with technology, Broadband, internet, and other IT services throughout the county
- Continuous business growth throughout the County
- Continuous improve in updating our technology in all areas especially in public safety, EMS, Sheriff, and fire
- Keep public safety departments well staffed as we possibly can
- With the mental health situation, continuing working with Vaya and Substance Use and Treatment Committee that Commissioner Cox serves on
- Keep our Department of Social Services employees as well staffed as possible, keeping them from going to other counties
- Increase interest in foster care
- Finalization and full implementation of the Health Department's strategic plan
- Finalize and select the provider for the medical situation that we are in with the hospital, whether it is hospital renovations, urgent care, emergency rooms in different portions of the County – Pine Hall being the newest one (don't think they are currently in the situation)
- Need to make sure we don't forget that we need to make a permanent selection for county manager in the upcoming timeframe - Amber has been serving as the interim county manager for almost a year now
- Complete our debt management study with our financial advisor – Carter and Associates
- Remembering that we have a property re-evaluation in 2025 which is going to be a big issue – Tax Administrator Brim has done a very good job explaining all the details of the re-evaluation during the commissioners' meeting and now going out to the different communities to discuss the upcoming re-evaluation
- Continuous improvement in our technology and IT Services – with all the cyber issues going on right now in America, can hit us just as it can any other county
- Continue with the new animal shelter project
- Continue progress with our strategic planning process that is scheduled for the end of

February

- Talked with people in E911, law enforcement, and EMS - they are hoping for the state-of-the-art equipment if it can be afforded along with needed personnel
- Continue with Water and Sewer Projects that are currently being done
- Completing technology infrastructure
- Believe that is it – thank you

Vice Chairman Wood commented

- Agree with all those that have been mentioned
- Still have concerns regarding internet because everyone in the County does not have internet access
- The number of people working from home in this County has increased and they need internet access
- Our kids need it
- We are behind until internet is in every home
- Still have not seen my grant writer, believe when we get the grant writer, it will solve some other problems
  - Such as the grant that King Senior Center Coordinator Paula Hall shared with the entire county – did not keep just for King
  - We now have senior centers covering the entire county
  - That money is going away
  - I do not want to see these senior centers stopped
  - Got news for everyone, there are more senior citizens in the county than there are 16-year-olds
  - We have got to keep those centers going
- The next one, I am just embarrassed, we have all these parks (just got a new one) that we are not looking after
  - They are all falling down
  - Our citizens use these parks
  - Our citizens deserve better
  - Think that problem can be solved with a grant writer
- That is all for me

Commissioner Cox commented:

- Agree with what has been said about the fund balance and trying to get it back up to around 20% if possible
- Public safety is always a priority – making sure they are well staffed and looking again at the pay study if we need to or whatever
- Like it has been said, the turnover in some of those areas might be indicative of the pay needing to be looked at – would be definitely worth looking into
- Volunteer Fire Departments
  - With this budget, it would make sense to at least start looking at ways to help them – strategically planning for the future
  - Think some of that is already being done
  - Know some came to us about increasing the fire tax last budget year, I know, we did not increase the fire tax last year
  - Think that will be back on the table this year
- Mental Health and Behavioral Health
  - I think Vaya is willing and able to help with that part – there is a lot of state money that rolls through Department of Social Services that could help with mental health and behavioral health as well as using the opioid funding to hire that position for the Health Department – that will also help with the mental health

- Want to look into the demolition at the old prison camp that was in last year's budget
- Want to get the new animal shelter started this year as well as the expansion of the courthouse
- Education
  - I know we don't know what the Board of Education will be asking for, but we need to be ready to look at capital needs for the school system this coming year
  - If the goal is to try to keep as many schools as possible open because last year during the budget the goal was consolidation – not sure what we are doing now
  - Not even sure anyone knows
  - With that being said, we still have to try to plan around that for the future – old buildings and what to do with them
- Like Vice Chairman Wood noted the parks – was in Francisco yesterday and one of the biggest questions was the land donated by Mark Black for a park
  - Got to meet Mark and personally thank him for his land donation for a park for Francisco
  - Agree grants could help with the establishment of that park
  - Don't know what kind of funding is needed to be included in this year's budget for that park this year
  - Need to look at the history of what has been done as far as funding from the county for other parks in the county (Pinnacle, Germanton, etc.) – Commissioner Morris may know more about funding since he was the county manager
  - Vice Chairman Wood made a good point that not enough is being done to keep the parks operational and updated
  - Know we have contracts/agreements with different groups pertaining to the other parks in the county – may have to be something similar with Northwest Stokes – a volunteer group
- That is all I have today

Chairman Chandler commented:

- Pretty much agree with what all the commissioners have stated today
- To touch on the parks
  - We are very, very underserving with our parks in Stokes County
  - I think that parks/recreation are very important to the quality of life – not just for the younger generation but also for the older generation as well
  - I know that we can't do everything at once, but maybe as we move forward, we may need to look down the road at having a separate parks/recreation department with a director
  - I know that Public Works Director Stewart Easter does a great job to keep up the maintenance on the parks that we are required to do
- Hate to say this, but I did fight for a full-time grant writer and only got a part time grant writer – thinks that is partly why we can't get one – Amber may can speak more about this
- Sometimes you have to make decisions – as they say - you get what you pay for
- Bottom line – we do need a grant writer
- There is a lot of money available out there for parks and recreation
- This falls into what I talked about after the budget, yet to see a report from the King YMCA – that is who we contract with for recreation

Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown noted that would be coming to the Board in March.

Chairman Chandler continued:

- That pretty sums it up for me

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Did not mention property tax increase
- My philosophy has always been to do a property tax increase as a last resort – that does not mean that I would not do a property tax increase
- We have to analyze what our real needs are and what we have to pay for – then determine if a tax increase is needed but only raise property taxes as a last resort
- We all need to continue to support that quarter of a cent sales tax – getting that approved – it will help some

Commissioner Cox noted the need to get that citizen led community committee up and going to promote the quarter of a cent sales tax.

Vice Chairman Wood commented:

- What I see developing for Stokes County, especially for Vade Mecum from Park Superintendent Riddlebarger's recent report, the influx of visitors is going to be huge
- I think the future of Stokes County is going to be small businesses, we do not have the land or the infrastructure for Boeing to open a place next week
- We need to make sure that Forsyth Tech and the County help people that want to start a small business in Stokes County, don't know how that fits into the budget
- I think that is the truth and no one wants to hear the truth

Chairman Chandler called for any last comments regarding the upcoming budget.

Vice Chairman Wood stated that he would like to hear Lisa and Amber's input on the upcoming budget.

Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown responded:

- Will keep it brief for now
- It goes along with everything that you all have already said
- Have already had discussions with Human Resources and we are working with North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) regarding pay scale currently used by the County such as – what is the best option for us going forward because I think we both think that is a priority for the County
- It affects a lot of other things than just what you see – turnover, quality of life for employees, overall satisfaction, retirement, longevity
- This is not a simple fix – if a new salary study is needed, it will not be in this year's budget
- We want to do something to try to help our employees
- We have not done a cost-of-living increase in several years
- Something is needed but just don't know the answer to that yet
- Department budgets are due March 8<sup>th</sup> – starting the process a little earlier this year in order to have more time to make those decisions and hopefully this will also give the Board more time to look at the budget, deliberate if needed, and make those decisions to move the County forward
- Working on both the courthouse and the animal shelter projects – currently receiving bids for the demolition needed at the old prison camp – which should be started very soon
- Public safety is working on their implementation of their new software along with Finance
- Finance had representation from CitySuite last week starting their software implementation
- Human Resources has recently implemented Paylocity, which still has a few kinks that we are working out – hope this new software will be a positive thing for our employees
- Currently exploring how performance evaluations and personnel actions can be done on the system eliminating all those paper transactions which should make things a lot better and easier for staff
- Employees will be able to obtain their personal information without contacting HR – such as

- a copy of a specific paystub, W2, etc.
- We are making improvements
- Hoping by the time we present a recommended budget; we will have a better update regarding the new software conversions

Finance Director Lankford responded:

- Look at the big picture – services, cost increases
- Revenue streams, not sure what that could be, but need new revenue streams to help offset budget increases

Vice Chairman Wood commented:

- Want to say, I am impressed with the people we have got and the job they all do
- I just want to say thank you

### **Administrative Contracts Discussion**

Chairman Chandler opened the floor with the following comments regarding the Administrative Contracts Discussion for the Interim County Manager and Interim Clerk:

- As previously mentioned, the year mark is coming up regarding the contracts for the interim county manager and administrative assistant clerk duties
- Have updates coming regarding the permanent county manager position later this week at the Board's strategic planning session
- Need time to properly advertise, interview, and hire a permanent county manager
- In lieu of that, we need to extend the contracts until July which is the target date for filling the county manager's position permanently
- There are no changes in the contracts other than the termination date
- Are there any questions or is there a consensus from the Board for the extension of the contracts

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Confirmed with Chairman Chandler the extension was for both contracts until July
- Confirmed with Chairman Chandler that it is probably not feasible to get this done before July, but contracts could be terminated if that happened before July

Chairman Chandler responded that his understanding was that it would probably be hard to get a permanent manager in the position before July but would know more later this week.

There was no opposition from the Board to extending both contracts.

Commissioner Cox confirmed with Attorney Michaud that the Board should actually vote on the decision to extend the contracts.

The Board discussed amending the contract and placing the contract back on the next agenda.

With consensus of the Board, Chairman Chandler, directed Interim County Manager/Clerk Brown to amend both contracts and place them back on the March 11<sup>th</sup> action 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.

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

Chairman Chandler presented the following information regarding nominations at the February 12<sup>th</sup> meeting for the Walnut Cove Planning/Zoning Board – ETJ Appointments:

- Two regular appointments:
  - Gregg LaRoche
  - Worth (Alex) Younts
- One alternate appointment:
  - Lisa Lee Hairston

With no further applications, Chairman Chandler did not open the floor for nominations.

Commissioner Mendenhall confirmed with Chairman Chandler that the Board motioned and approved to close the nominations at the last meeting.

Chairman Chandler polled the Board for the appointments:

- Commissioner Mendenhall - Gregg LaRoche and Worth (Alex) Younts for the two regular appointments and Lisa Lee Hairston for the alternate appointment
- Commissioner Morris - Gregg LaRoche and Worth (Alex) Younts for the two regular appointments and Lisa Lee Hairston for the alternate appointment
- Chairman Chandler - Gregg LaRoche and Worth (Alex) Younts for the two regular appointments and Lisa Lee Hairston for the alternate appointment
- Vice Chairman Wood- Gregg LaRoche and Worth (Alex) Younts for the two regular appointments and Lisa Lee Hairston for the alternate appointment
- Commissioner Cox - Gregg LaRoche and Worth (Alex) Younts for the two regular appointments and Lisa Lee Hairston for the alternate appointment

Chairman Chandler noted that the Board unanimously appointment Gregg LaRoche and Worth (Alex) Younts for the two regular appointments and Lisa Lee Hairston for the one alternate appointment.

## **Resolution Recognizing Farmer Appreciation**

Chairman Chandler presented and read the following proposed Resolution proclaiming Thursday, April 4, 2024 as Farmer's Appreciation Day in Stokes County for the Board's consideration:

### **Resolution Proclaiming Farmer Appreciation Day in Stokes County**

**Whereas**, the County of Stokes, the Stokes Soil & Water Conservation District, the Cooperative Extension, Farm Service Agency, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the NC Forest Service desire to host the Farmer Appreciation Day to recognize the contributions of our farmers to Stokes County; and

**Whereas**, the Board of Commissioners recognizes that the county's farmers contribute greatly to Stokes County's economic base; and

**Whereas**, the Board believes that all county citizens benefit from farming activities in some manner; and

**Whereas**, the Board agrees that a Farmer Appreciation Day would show our county's support for the existing farming community and honor past activities that have contributed so much to the

culture and heritage of Stokes County; and

**Whereas**, the Board recognizes and appreciates the local businesses within the County that provides funding for a BBQ and Chicken Dinner with live entertainment to be held at South Stokes High School with all Stokes County citizens invited.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT**

The Stokes County Board of Commissioners hereby proclaim **Thursday, April 4, 2024** as **Farmer Appreciation Day** in Stokes County and extends its appreciation and gratitude to the county's farmers for their many contributions to Stokes County.

Adopted by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners this 26<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2024.

Chairman Chandler entertained a motion to approve the Resolution Proclaiming Farmer Appreciation Day in Stokes County.

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to approve the Resolution Proclaiming Farmer Appreciation Day in Stokes County. Vice Chairman Wood seconded the motion.

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

With no further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

**Adjournment**

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.

---

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

---

**Brad Chandler**  
**Chair**





**Board of County Commissioners**  
**March 11, 2024**  
**6:00 PM**

**Item number: V.b.**

**Budget Amendments**

Contact: Lisa Lankford, Finance Director

**Summary:**

Budget Amendment #52 - To transfer funds for repairs to garbage trucks that have exceeded the current fiscal year budgeted amount.

Budget Amendment #53 - To transfer funds from Public Works part time wages to Solid Waste part time wages.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Budget Amendments 52-53	3/8/2024	Cover Memo

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
100.4720.351	Solid Waste M&R Auto	\$ 140,000.00	\$30,000.00	\$ 170,000.00
100.4720.180	Solid Waste Prof Svcs	\$ 40,000.00	\$ (10,000.00)	\$ 30,000.00
100.4720.440	Solid Waste Contractual Svcs	\$ 475,000.00	\$ (10,000.00)	\$ 465,000.00
100.4720.590	Solid Waste Improvements	\$ 20,000.00	\$ (10,000.00)	\$ 10,000.00
	TOTALS	\$ 675,000.00	\$0.00	\$ 675,000.00

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

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.

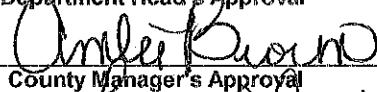
Account Number	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	CURRENT BUDGETED AMOUNT	INCREASE (DECREASE)	AS AMENDED
	TOTALS	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

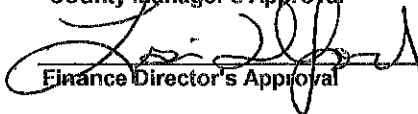
SECTION 2. Copies of this amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk of the Board of Commissioners, Budget Officer and to the Finance Director.

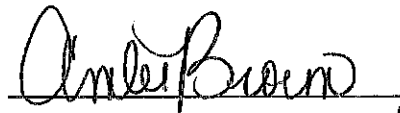
Adopted this 11th day of March, 2024.

Verified by the Clerk of the Board

  
Department Head's Approval

  
County Manager's Approval

  
Finance Director's Approval



3-7-24  
Date

3/7/24  
Date

3/7/24  
Date

# Memorandum

---

**Stokes County Public Works  
Stewart Easter, Public Works Director**

**Re: Budget Amendment**

**This budget amendment is justified as follows:**

**Repairs to Trash trucks have exceeded the budget amount for current fiscal year with additional expenses expected. Professional services (180) are expected to be less than budgeted. Contractual Services (440) are below budget as of March 2024 & is expected to remain the same or below for the rest of FY '24.**

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
100.4720.020	Solid Waste Part Time Wages	\$ 282,518.00	\$5,000.00	\$ 287,518.00
100.4190.020	Public Works Part Time Wages	\$ 5,000.00	\$ (5,000.00)	\$ -
				\$ -
				\$ -
	TOTALS	\$ 287,518.00	\$0.00	\$ 287,518.00

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

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.

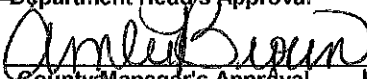
Account Number	ACCOUNT DESCRIPTION	CURRENT BUDGETED AMOUNT	INCREASE (DECREASE)	AS AMENDED
				\$ -
	TOTALS	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -

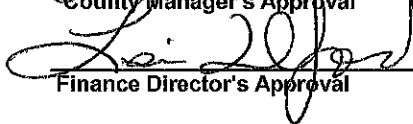
SECTION 2. Copies of this amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk of the Board of Commissioners, Budget Officer and to the Finance Director.

Adopted this 11th day of March, 2024.

Verified by the Clerk of the Board

  
Department Head's Approval

  
County Manager's Approval

  
Finance Director's Approval



3-7-24  
Date

3/7/24  
Date

3/7/24  
Date

# Memorandum

---

**Stokes County Public Works  
Stewart Easter, Public Works Director**

**Re: Budget Amendment**

**This budget amendment is justified as follows:**

**\$5000 was budgeted for a Dump Truck Driver for Public Works and to use for Solid Waste as needed. This wasn't needed for Public Works this fiscal year. Please move budgeted monies to Solid Waste Part Time to help cover shortage.**



**Board of County Commissioners**  
**March 11, 2024**  
**6:00 PM**

**Item number: V.c.**

**Tax Office Items for Approval**

Contact: Richard Brim, Tax Administrator

Summary:

**Items for Approval on March 11, 2024.**

1. Real and Personal Releases more than \$100.00.
2. Real and Personal Refunds more than \$100.00.
3. Advertisement of the 2023 Tax Liens.
4. 2024 Board of Equalization and Review Dates.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Tax Office Agenda	2/21/2024	Cover Memo

# TAX COLLECTION STATUS REPORT

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	3,710,649.57	3,333,620.52	5,955.84	9,459.15	-	39,196.18	8,283.42	39,431.16	771,961.39	212,751.44	73,647.23	4,316.24	455,388.57
FEBRUARY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MARCH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
APRIL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MAY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
JUNE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SUB TOTAL	\$13,605,672.93	\$12,221,752.46	CONT'D	CONT'D		\$384,033.68	\$71,589.71	\$271,184.88	\$1,999,696.03	\$2,940,148.91	\$556,248.39	\$29,694.87	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	\$516,139.07	\$464,529.54				\$14,552.32	\$7,814.29	\$12,792.12	\$73,402.97				
PERCENTAGE	96.35%	96.34%				96.35%	90.16%	95.50%	96.46%				
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	21,333.74	19,067.75	-	9,583.58	6.00	462.85	-	385.69	3,618.60	3,635.80	973.02	78.18	3,026.37
FEBRUARY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MARCH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
APRIL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MAY	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
JUNE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
SUB TOTAL	\$149,672.96	\$134,809.91	\$37,191.86	\$77,235.77	\$111.27	\$4,418.41	\$662.30	\$3,821.09	\$21,770.27	\$30,180.58	\$4,859.99	\$195.64	\$1,690,427.49
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	\$150,327.04	\$65,190.09	\$7,191.86	\$147,764.23	\$138.73	\$1,081.59	\$1,337.70	\$3,178.91	\$20,229.73				\$(39,126.51)
PERCENTAGE	49.89%	67.40%	123.97%	34.33%	44.51%	80.33%	33.12%	54.59%	51.83%				97.74%

# STOKES COUNTY TAX ADMINISTRATION RELEASE REPORT FOR JANUARY 2024

## 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>
HODGES, JASON C HODGES, GINGER B	1194 GOIN RD, WESTFIELD, NC 27053	4619-2023-2023-0001	\$74.70
CORDIAL, TANNER DREW	105 FOXDALE RD, KING, NC 27021	864194-2021-2021	\$53.88
WILLARD, LENDA JOHNSON	1059 FULP RD, WALNUT COVE, NC 27052	280125-2023-2023	\$76.54
MAIN, ROBERT STEPHEN	1120 BOXER DR, KING, NC 27021	861840-2023-2023	\$84.44
GARCIA, JUSTIN TYLER	174 GLENHAVEN WAY, DOBSON, NC 27017	879972-2023-2023	\$87.34

  
RICHARD T. BRIM  
TAX ADMINISTRATOR

2/21/24  
DATE

TOTAL AMOUNT \$376.90



# STOKES COUNTY TAX ADMINISTRATION RELEASE REPORT FOR JANUARY 2024

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

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>BILL NO.</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>REASON</u>
B & E CUSTOM CABINETS LLC	2855 NC 704 HWY W, LAWSONVILLE, NC 27022	858462-2022-2022	\$2,436.47	BUSINESS CLOSED AND PROPERTY SOLD
B & E CUSTOM CABINETS LLC	2855 NC 704 HWY W, LAWSONVILLE, NC 27022	858462-2023-2023	\$2,262.06	BUSINESS CLOSED AND PROPERTY SOLD

TOTAL AMOUNT	<u>\$4,698.53</u>
--------------	-------------------

Richard T. Brim  
RICHARD T. BRIM  
TAX ADMINISTRATOR

2/21/24  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
BRAD CHANDLER  
CHAIRMAN-STOKES COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

# STOKES COUNTY TAX ADMINISTRATION REFUND REPORT FOR JANUARY 2024

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>
SIMMONS, JESSE WILLIAM	1107 JC COX RD, WESTFIELD, NC 27053	74061207	100.3100.113	\$75.51	VEHICLE SOLD
			209.3100.112	\$18.50	
			211.3100.001	\$9.25	
			112.3100.001	\$67.83	
WORKMAN, BECKY GRAHAM WORKMAN, LARRY WAYNE	1035 COLD RIVER RUN RD, WESTFIELD, NC 27053	62612127	100.3100.113	\$84.07	VEHICLE TOTAL LOSS
			209.3100.112	\$20.59	
			211.3100.001	\$10.29	
			112.3100.001	\$75.52	

TOTAL AMOUNT

\$361.56

Richard T. Brim  
RICHARD T. BRIM  
TAX ADMINISTRATOR

2/21/24  
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: February 1, 2024**

**To: Stokes County Board of Commissioners**

**From: Richard Brim, Tax Administrator**

**Reference: Advertisement of 2023 Tax Liens**

Based on NCGS 105-369(a), "In February of each year, the tax collector must report to the governing body the total amount of unpaid taxes for the current fiscal year that are liens on real property...". "Upon receipt of the report, the governing body must order the tax collector to advertise the tax liens...".

Based on NCGS 105-369(b1), "After the governing body orders the tax collector to advertise the tax liens, the tax collector must send a notice to the record owner of each affected parcel of the property, as determined as of the date the taxes became delinquent. The notice must be sent to the owner's last known address by first-class mail at least 30 days before the date of advertisement is to be published...". Our projected date for the mailing of second notices is March 1, 2024.

(As of February 1, 2024)

<u>Delinquent 2023 Tax Bills</u>	<u># of Bills</u>	<u>Principal Due</u>
General County	3383	\$760,388.18
Schools Operating Expense	3383	\$683,126.82
Education Fund	3383	\$ 93,129.92
Town of Danbury	6	\$ 1,415.34
City of King	180	\$108,943.86
Town of Walnut Cove	113	\$ 28,897.77
King Fire District	292	\$ 19,289.81
Rural Hall Fire District	99	\$ 5,748.92
County Service Fire District	2312	\$116,118.24
Walnut Cove Fire District	387	\$ 20,779.68
<b>Total Bills Delinquent</b>	<b>3383</b>	<b>\$1,837,838.54</b>

Through this memo, I am requesting the governing body order the tax collector to advertise these unpaid accounts no earlier than 30 days after the mailing of past due notices (less any bills paid between the report date and the advertising date). Our projected date for the publication of the 2023 tax liens in The Stokes News is June 27, 2024.

*Richard Brim*

Date 2/21/24

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Richard Brim  
Stokes County Tax Administrator

Brad Chandler  
Chairman, Board of Commissioners



**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 19, 2024**

**To: Board of County Commissioners**

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

**Reference: Requested 2024 Board of Equalization and Review Dates**

Listed below are the proposed hearing dates for the 2024 Board of Equalization and Review:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Time</u>
April 15, 2024	Monday	6:00 PM
May 6, 2024	Monday	2:00 PM

Please feel free to change the above dates if necessary.

Sincerely,

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

**Richard T. Brim**  
**Tax Administrator**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Approval**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Denial**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Brad Chandler**  
**Chairman, Board of Commissioners**

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



## **Board of County Commissioners**

**March 11, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

**Item number: VI.a.**

### **Stokes County Annual Report 2023**

Contact: Interim Manager/Clerk to the Board Amber Brown

#### **Summary:**

Interim Manager Brown will introduce the 2023 Annual Report for Stokes County. Department Heads put together highlights for their departments for the year 2023 and are combined into a comprehensive county annual report.

The Stokes County Annual Report will be presented at the meeting and uploaded to the agenda immediately after. Copies of the report will be provided to each of the commissioners at the meeting. If needed, questions and comments on the report can be addressed at a later date or meeting.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Stokes County 2023 Annual Report	3/12/2024	Cover Memo



# Stokes County 2023 Annual Report



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# Animal Control

## Tommy Reeves, Chief Animal Control Officer

In 2023, there were many personnel changes in Animal Control including the hiring of a new Chief Animal Control Officer, Mr. Tommy Reeves, towards the end of the year. Several new employees have been welcomed aboard in both the officer positions and kennel attendant staff positions. With Ms. Natalie Johnson being given additional duties in her attendant position, she has taken on a larger role in supervising the animal shelter operations. While 2023 was a year of increased turnover for Animal Control, things are on a positive uptick and department operations are moving forward in great stride as we go into 2024.

There were periods in 2023 where shelter operations slowed down while the County transitioned between veterinarians. The shelter was able to contract with and utilize the veterinarian services of Dr. Ralph Houser who has been a great asset to animal services. Dr. Houser developed a working protocol for animal care that is being utilized by shelter staff. This has allowed kennel attendants to increase care and treatment of animals at the shelter which has greatly reduced the amount of outside vet bills. Through this partnership and increased training for department personnel, Animal Control is able to better serve the community and animals in a way that is improved for the county.

The animal shelter was able to receive a shipping container to store feed in which has freed up additional storage space in other buildings and has increased food/supply organization. From the previous FY 23/24 budget, a CO2 dart gun and five .22 magnum rifles have been ordered and implemented into service by animal control officers. The implementation of rifles will allow for more humane responses and will increase the toolbox of resources available to officers for the protection of animals and citizens.

**2023 TOTALS:** The below numbers for 2023 were pulled from the current shelter software system. This system is very inundated and with the personnel turnover, different reports may reflect varying outputs. To fix this issue, in 2024 we are working towards acquiring a new program that would provide more effective results for both shelter and field staff with reporting and filing. More information to come.

- Calls for Service: Animal Control ran approximately **1,100 calls**
- Shelter numbers:
  - Adoptions from the shelter: **165 animals**
  - Adoptions by other rescues: **325 animals**
  - Redemption to owner: **53 animals**
  - Euthanized: **214 animals**



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## **Arts and Cultural Services/Arts Council**



**Eddy McGee, Director of Arts and Cultural Services**

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Hosted multiple gallery exhibits, including Forsyth Technical Community College Faculty Show, Stokes County Schools exhibit, King Senior Center exhibit, and Wood to Art woodworking show.
- Served as the District 10 Lead Partner for the Artist Support Grant (five counties) in awarding \$14,000 in artist grants.
- Organized Arts Education programs in Stokes County Schools, including Columbia Marionette Theatre, Cherokee Historical Association, Mike Wiley Productions, NC Theatre for Young People, Once Upon a Blue Ridge, Shared Radiance Shakespeare, and Stokes Junior Appalachian Musicians program.
- Organized a Stokes middle and high school field trip to attend Mozart's COSI fan TUTTE opera hosted by the UNCG Opera and Music Departments.
- Awarded more than \$7,500 in college scholarships.
- Represented more than 125 artists in The Arts Place of Stokes retail market. Combined market and coffee shop annual sales of over \$200,000, paid out to artists and employees.
- Awarded more than \$100k in arts program grants, including Grassroots Grant, TAPS Grant, Artist Support Grant from the NC Arts Council.
- Sponsored events throughout Stokes County, including Foothills Farm Festival, Stokes Partnership for Children, King Pow Wow, Concerts in the Cove, Memorial and Veteran's Day programs at King Veteran's Memorial, Juneteenth in Walnut Cove, Sandy Ridge Bluegrass Show, City of King Movie Nights, Stokes Special Olympics.
- Organized and supported the following events; Hanging Rock Polar Plunge, 49<sup>th</sup> Stokes Stomp Festival on the Dan, Reach the Peaks Challenge, Stokes Soup in a Bowl, Christmas in Historic Danbury, and New Year's Eve Ball.
- Organized programs at The Arts Place of Stokes, including performances by Darrel Van Leer, Anthony Davis & the Gospel Intruders, Copper Children, Taylor Vaden, Carley Arrowood, John Cowan, and Michael Reno Harrell. Legend of Sleepy Hollow, Dolly, and Beautiful Star theatrical performances, Stained glass, fiber arts,

painting, and pottery classes. Kids Summer Art Camps. Star Gazers Special Needs Camp. Venue rental for Stokes County Schools, Stokes Early College Prom, Stokes County Health Dept., and a multitude of baby showers, reunions, and birthday parties.

- Advocacy supporter with ARTS NC and NC Arts Council to Arts Caucus Chair, Representative Kyle Hall, for additional arts funding to the NC Legislature that amounted to an increase of \$2.5 million to NC Arts Grassroots funds, \$1.5 million to A+ Schools, and more than \$48 million in capital arts funding in all 100 NC counties.
- Impacted more than 30,000 children and adults through the arts in 2023.

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## Emergency Communications

**Matt Boyles, Emergency Communications Director**

### LETTER FROM DIRECTOR

Dear County Manager Brown,

As Director of Stokes County Emergency Communications, I am pleased to present the 2023 annual report of our Emergency Communications (E911 Center). The communications center provides outstanding service to the citizens and visitors of Stokes County, and partner public safety agencies throughout the county. This report highlights the personnel, activities and accomplishments of the organization over the past year.

As you review this annual report, I am sure that you will agree that Stokes County is very fortunate to have these dedicated professionals working 24/7/365 to keep everyone safe. On behalf of our 911 Telecommunicators, we thank you for your continued support and dedication to our department and its employees.

Sincerely,  
Matt Boyles, Director



### VISION

To serve and support the public safety communications needs of our customers in the most efficient and responsive manner possible.

### MISSION

The Mission of the Stokes County Emergency Communications Center is to provide the citizens and visitors of Stokes County with the highest levels of emergency and non-emergency services through professional, accurate and efficient call taking and dispatching of resources. Our standard values are providing excellent customer service, compassion to all and teamwork within.

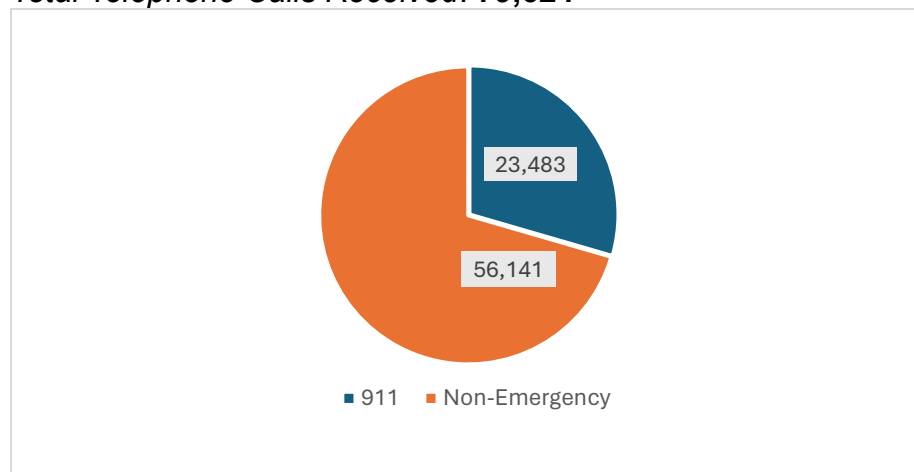
## Our Motto is “Community First”

### 2024 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

- Provide an ergonomically efficient and pleasant work environment.
- Retain appropriate level of staff within the department.
- Recruit and retain quality employees.
- Respond to calls for service and other public needs promptly.
- Process calls for service appropriately in order to provide services which protect persons and property and resolve problems in a professional and courteous manner.
- Develop and maintain open relationships with other agencies, organizations and the public at large.
- Continue providing training and continuing education for personnel.
- Continue to support operations with contemporary policies and procedures.
- Upgrade equipment as needed and continuously explore technological advances toward the enhancement of services provided.
- Maintain contingency plans.
- Continue to support National Telecommunicator Week.
- Continue to support and enhance the training and quality assurance program.
- Manage the fiscal, capital, information and personnel resources of the Emergency Communications Center with efficiency and care.

### CALL CENTER STATISTICS

*Total Telephone Calls Received: 79,624*



**911 and Non-Emergency Phone Calls Breakdown**

## ANSWER TIME STANDARDS

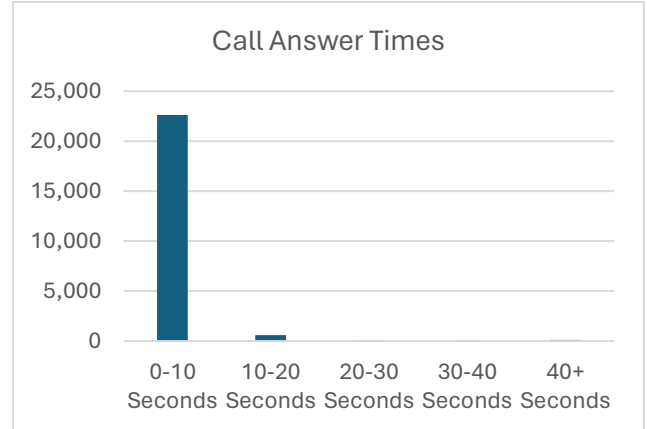
In accordance with North Carolina Legislation –  
Administrative Code 09 NCAC 06C .0209:

*(a) Ninety percent of 911 calls received on emergency lines shall be answered within 10 seconds, and 95 percent of 911 calls received on emergency lines shall be answered within 20 seconds.*

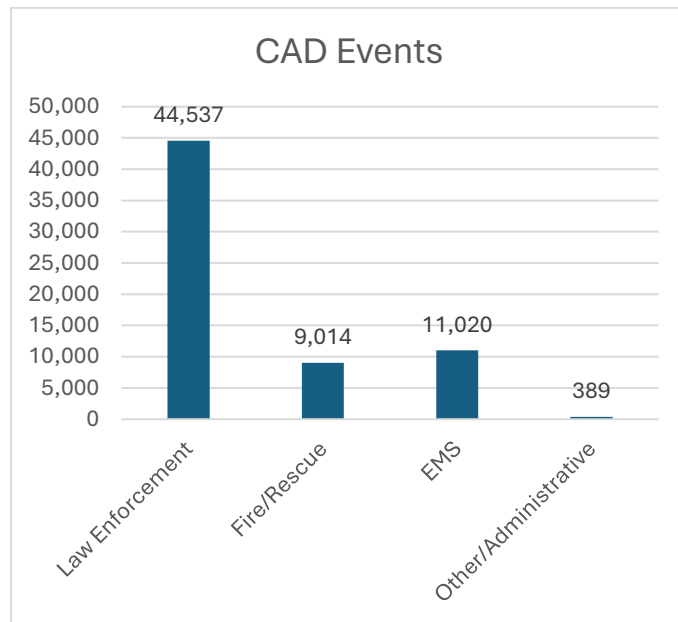
### Call Answer Time - Pass/Fail Rate:

**PASS: 98.52%**

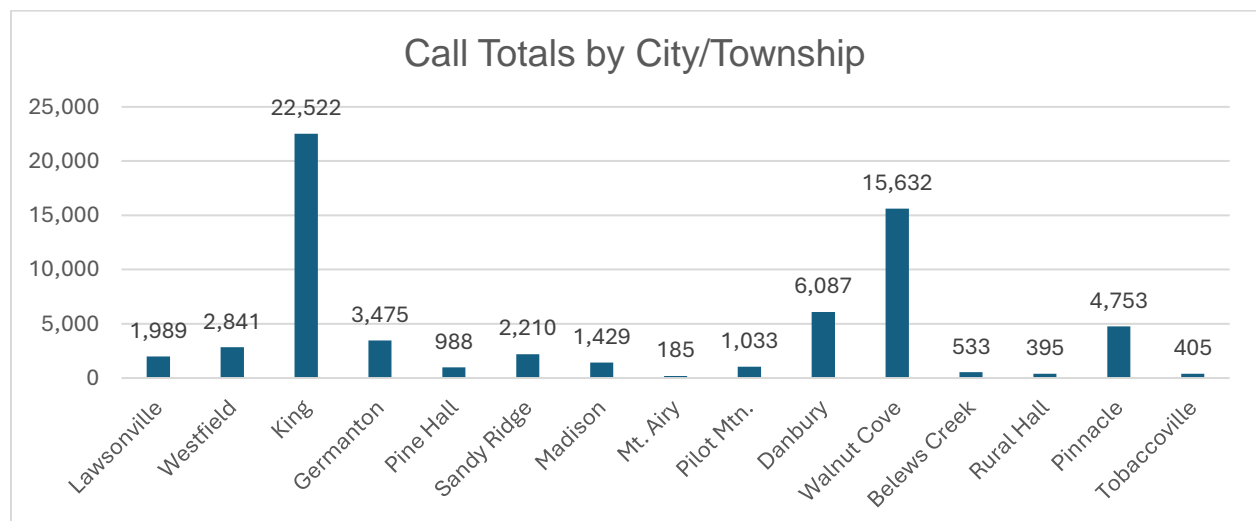
**FAIL: 1.48%**



## COMPUTER AIDED DISPATCH (CAD) SUMMARY



**Total CAD Events  
Created: 64,960**



## DEPARTMENT TRAINING

Emergency Communications personnel must maintain specific dispatch certifications throughout the year. These certifications are managed by the completion of continuing education courses. Telecommunicators attend con-ed courses monthly and quarterly. Monthly con-ed is taught in-house by a combination of in-house staff and outside agencies. Telecommunicators are also encouraged to take training courses that pertain to their job duties outside of the department throughout the state and country. For 2023, our employees attended over 1000 hours of training.

### Training Topics and Highlights for 2023

- Active Shooter Training (tabletop exercise)
- Active Shooter Training (live in-person exercise) conducted at Walnut Cove Elementary
- DCI Module 6 Training
- CE with Richmond Community College
- APCO Telecommunicator Symposium – 3 days (Greensboro, NC)
- NC State Telecommunicators Conference – 4 days (Wilmington, NC)
- PSAP Managers Course – 10-month course
- EMS/Medical Con-ed at Hanging Rock State Park
- TDD Call Training – Conducted by the State of NC
- Sheriffs Citizen Academy
- 911 Communications and Operations Course (Associates Degree Program)
- Emotional/Mental Health Training

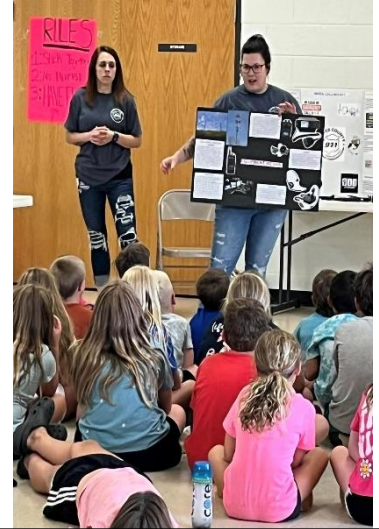




## PUBLIC EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Adopt-a-Family Christmas Drive



Stokes Family YMCA Summer Camp Event

## STAFF RECOGNITION

On the morning of February 2, 2023, Cindy Tuttle called 911 to report that her husband had gone into cardiac arrest and was not breathing. Shift Supervisor Adam Mabe answered the call and immediately began providing Mrs. Tuttle CPR instructions while his partners were dispatching first responders. Once fire and EMS arrived, they took over CPR and transported Mr. Tuttle to Forsyth Medical Center. Approximately 2 weeks later, Mr. Tuttle walked out of the hospital and returned home. In April, we had the chance to personally meet the Tuttle family where TC Supervisor Adam Mabe was presented with a Life Saving Award for his quick actions to recognize the need for CPR and instructing the caller through the performance of CPR. Here is a quote from Mrs. Tuttle:



*Can you find out for us who was on 911 duty on the morning of February 21, 2023? My husband and I would like to thank him for helping to save his life. That morning my husband, Brad Tuttle, went into cardiac arrest (V-Tach) and luckily I was there and was quickly able to get someone through 911. The dispatcher walked me through CPR very calmly and I was able to do what he said to do, though I had not had CPR since I was in high school. First Responders, Fire Dept and EMS arrived on the scene quickly and were able to continue CPR and used the defibrillator to revive him. Today he is back at work for half days and is continuing to recover, with a good prognosis. We call him the Miracle Man. The doctors all said that this outcome only happens in 10 to 15% of their patients who have these events out of the hospital. They credit CPR and all the immediate steps that were taken. I think 911 should be recognized for their role in this.*

## **2023 TELECOMMUNICATOR OF THE YEAR**

Each year Stokes County Emergency Communications recognizes an employee who exemplifies outstanding service and dedication to our department and to the citizens of Stokes County. Nominations are submitted by their peers in writing and then an overall selection is made by the County Manager based on the nominations. This year's award winner was TC Shift Supervisor Nicole Durham!



## **PSAP ASSESSMENT**

NC legislation requires that the NC 911 Board assess PSAP's to determine if their operations and procedures follow NC Administrative Code. On June 7, 2023 Stokes County Emergency Communications had our PSAP Assessment conducted by the NC 911 Board staff. This was the first time that our 911 center and its operations had been assessed by the state. I am extremely happy to report that our department passed 100% with no deficiencies. Stokes County Emergency Communications will not be assessed again until 2026.

## **SOFTWARE AND EQUIPMENT UPGRADES**

This year, our department was able to purchase and implement new software and equipment to enhance public safety and to better serve our community. We also began the process of replacing our CAD software with a project completion and go-live date in mid-2024. I would like to thank the County Manager and the Board of County Commissioners for approving these projects and upgrades, and for making public safety a top priority in Stokes County. Below are some highlights:

- Back-up radio replacement – approx. \$24,000
- Radio Console Replacement – approx. \$121,000
- RapidSOS Premium Software (caller location software) - \$12,000
- RAVE Panic Button software (Partnership with Stokes County Schools)
- Dispatch chairs – approx. \$17,000
- Southern Software CAD replacement (2024) – approx. \$400,000

## N.C. Cooperative Extension – Stokes Center

**Matt Lenhardt, County Extension Director**



### STAFF

Matt Lenhardt, County Extension Director

Amy McKenzie, Administrative Assistant

Taylor Hartman, Extension Agent (4-H Youth Development)

Taylor Darnell, Area Agent – Commercial Horticulture, Field Crops, Pesticide Education

Savannah Meyers, Extension Agent (Family and Consumer Sciences)

Kendra Phipps, Extension Agent (Agriculture – Livestock and Field Crops)

VACANT, Extension Agent (Agriculture and Natural Resources)



### OUR MISSION

We extend research-based knowledge to all North Carolinians, helping them transform science into everyday solutions that improve their lives and grow our state.

### OUR VISION

We are the trusted, go-to resource for connecting research and education to the communities, economies, and families of our state, creating prosperity for all North Carolinians.

### PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK

NC State Extension organizes our core programming into three areas. While these areas do not represent all of Extension's efforts, they reflect the base services we offer across Stokes County, as well as where we are best equipped to impact the communities and economy.



#### FEEDING OUR FUTURE

Extension innovates better agricultural products and practices, connecting farmers with research-based tools and information to help grow North Carolina's nearly \$100 billion agriculture industry.

**> 575 educational activities offered**  
**> 4647 participants engaged in program activities**



#### IMPROVING OUR HEALTH

Extension helps people make healthier decisions, reduce their risk of chronic disease and live better lives, while educating the public about agriculture and local food systems.

**> 54 educational activities offered**  
**> 1730 participants engaged in program activities**



#### ENRICHING OUR YOUTH

Extension's 4-H program addresses the diverse issues and needs of today's youth, helping hundreds of thousands of youth grow into healthy and engaged leaders.

**> 57 educational activities offered**  
**> 2170 youth participated in 4-H activities**



## EXTENSION EVENTS



**Stokes County Beef Bash-** The Stokes County Cattlemen's Association held its first Beef Bash on October 13th, 2023. The community came together to taste delicious local beef, network with Stokes County cattle producers, and celebrate local agriculture.



**Clover Classic Livestock Show** - The show was held April 1-2, 2023 at the Winston-Salem Fairgrounds (home of the Carolina Classic Fair) in Winston-Salem. Showmanship (youth ages 18 and under) and a skill-a-thon (for youth ages 8-18) took place both days with over 100 youth participating from across NC, SC and VA.



**Farmer Appreciation Dinner** - Our office partnered with Stokes County Soil & Water, NC Forest Services, Farm Service Agency, and NRCS to host the 22nd annual dinner on March 23, 2023 with more than 400 people in attendance.



**National Ag Day Celebration** - Our agents attended the National Ag Day Celebration in Lawsonville on March 21, 2023 and met Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler.



**Safe Plates for Food Managers** - The class was offered in April and August 2023 with 13 attendees. Stokes County Environmental Health Inspectors co-taught the series.

**INTERESTED IN AGRITOURISM?**

Attend this FREE one-day conference at the Forsyth Tech Stokes County Center!

**Saturday, January 21, 2023**  
10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

The event is free, but you must register by scanning the QR code or visiting: [rsvp.forsythtech.edu/event/292/sessions](https://rsvp.forsythtech.edu/event/292/sessions)

In partnership with: **NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION** **NC A&T**

Sponsored by: **FARM CREDIT CAROLINA**

**ForsythTech** **STOKES COUNTY CENTER**

**Agritourism Conference** - In partnership with Forsyth Tech Community College, Stokes County Center, Stokes County Cooperative Extension provided an workshop in January 2023. Twenty-three participants attended the workshop.



**Pesticide Collection** - Stokes County Cooperative Extension, in cooperation with Pesticide Disposal Assistance Program (PDAP), worked together to provide pesticide collection day for Stokes County. A total of 1,193 pounds of pesticide was collected and properly disposed.



**Shepherd Boot Camp** - Supply chain issues and subsequent price increases sparked by COVID-19 have led to an increased interest in small farms and homesteading. While sheep and goat numbers in NC have decreased over the past five years, the total value of sheep and goat inventory in NC has increased nearly \$800,000 from 2018 to 2022. When considering these factors in combination with overall increased interest in small ruminant production, it was evident that a workshop to build a strong foundation of proper management practices in small ruminant production was needed. Nineteen people from eleven counties in NC participated in the course.



**Wool Pool** - Sheep producers have been receiving low prices and are not able to adequately get a fair or market driven price for their product. Extension in NC and VA addressed this problem continuing to pool and bale wool for their producers to market wool. For the 2023 year after multiple meetings and discussions, we felt that we must continue this program as it meets the needs of many producers to garner a high price and receive payments from the FSA wool program. In 2023, we were able to ship just over 25,000 pounds of wool to Chargers Wool Processors for a premium price for local farmers.



**Stokes County Bee School** - Fifteen people attended an introductory class into beekeeping. There were hands on demonstration stations at the four Saturday classes as well as a field day to complete the certified beekeeper certification with NCSBA. The courses were held in February 2023.





**Stokes County Agricultural Fair** - Stokes County Cooperative Extension managed the livestock show with 68 youth exhibitors showcasing projects such as cattle, sheep and goats.



**4-H Summer Fun** - Summer Fun provides the opportunity for youth, ages 5-18, to participate in camps such as Dog Camp, Cloverbuds in Nature, STEM Camp and Life Skills Camp. 110 youth participated in the six camps offered in 2023.



**Mobile Processing Unit** - In 2023, the equipment was rented twenty-five times. Since 2022, 3400 birds have been processed. This has resulted in over \$115,000 economic impact. Stokes County Cooperative Extension offers two annual required trainings for consumers who plan to rent the equipment. Participants gained knowledge and skills to properly process poultry at home and produce a safe, wholesome product.



Learn. Grow. Share.

**Extension Master Gardener Volunteer** - We connect people with the benefits of consumer horticulture through research-based information, educational programming, and community outreach that empowers North Carolinians to cultivate healthy plants, landscapes, ecosystems, and communities.



**Commercial Horticulture** - Weed control in strawberry fields through recommended best management practices saved growers approximately \$7500 in chemical costs for the next growing season and approximately \$10,000 in labor for the rest of the season and the 2024 year.



**Continuing Education Units for Chemical Applicators** - 154 pesticide applicators received continuing education credits to keep their license valid and contribute to economic development within the county.

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## **District Resource Center (DRC)**

### **Laura Jones, DRC Director**

In December 2022, DRC director Tony C. Hill retired after serving Stokes County for a total of 35 years. Tony was with Stokes County Sheriff's department for the first 5 years. In December 1994 he started the Day Reporting Center now known as The District Resource Center. Laura Jones accepted the Director position in December 2022 upon Mr. Hill's retirement.

It has been a very busy year; in February of 2023 we welcomed Nora Gann to join the staff of DRC as the senior office assistant. Nora was a great asset to the DRC and immediately joined the Opioid Task force committee. With Nora's experience dealing with probationers and inmates, she fit right in to accomplish duties in the DRC and pre-trial release office.

We have had 18 participants in our Pretrial release program in 2023, saving the county 1,145 jail bed days totaling \$97,325.00. Four of these participants that were accepted into pretrial experienced medical/mental health conditions that required inpatient treatment at a medical/mental health facility. This also generated a savings to Stokes County in treatment costs of approximately \$100,000.00 along with manpower supervision hours. The average time for a pretrial participant in 2023 was 67 days.

We have supervised 35 participants with a total of 840 hours in our Community Service Work Program accomplishing duties of mowing, weed-eating, leaf removal, roadside trash pick-up, painting, vehicle cleaning and general cleaning.

In September of 2023, Nora Gann resigned her position at DRC/PTR due to driving distance and other economic reasons. Nora left Stokes County with good standing, and we wish her the best in all future endeavors.

October 2023 DRC/PTR welcomed Kimberly Shelley Lewis, into Senior Office Assistant position. Kimberly had worked part-time with DRC previously and has been a full time Stokes County employee for nearly five years, working part time for three years prior to full time employment. Kimberly transferred to DRC from the Stokes County Tax Department. She has experience with Stokes County Jail & Stokes County Senior Services as well.

In December 2023, Brandon Tucker, our DRC Work Program Coordinator celebrated his two-year full-time anniversary with our department. Brandon worked part-time with DRC/PRT from December 2017 to his full-time employment in 2021. Brandon is a phenomenal employee; he keeps his eye on the details and makes sure all safety procedures are number one in getting the work completed.

## Economic Development/Tourism

Tory Mabe, Economic Development/Tourism Tech Analyst



# Stokes County Demographics & Statistics



45,175

Population 2022

47

Median Age (2021)

\$57,539

Median Household Income (2022)



3.0%

November 2023  
Unemployment Rate

3.3% August 2023



Worked in Stokes County 6,616 (31.8%)  
Worked Outside of Stokes County 13,793 (66.3%)  
Worked Outside of North Carolina 395 (1.9%)

(Source: US Census Bureau Quick Facts & NC Commerce County Profile #37169)



\$36,481

Average Salary Increase In 2023  
From 2022

\$33,384



29.6

Minute  
Average Travel Time To Work

20,818

2021 Employed Population

# Small Business & Industry Establishments

Business Names Registered

320

2023

Assumed Business Names Registered Before 2017  
Expired at end of 2022 & Required Re-submission

86

2022

71

2021 Source:

Stokes County Register Of Deeds



Total Private Industry & Small Business Establishments

814



Total Retail Sales (With Food/Drink)..... \$191,900,000  
Total Retail Businesses (With Food/Drink)..... 184  
Average Sales/Business Total (With Food/Drink).... \$1,043,011  
Annual Taxable Retail Sales..... \$340,200,000



Total Manufacturing Establishments

29

## Small Businesses Welcomed to Stokes County in Last 5 Years Include:

Barn at Shelton Farm | Big Creek Lodge | Decked Out Burgers & Dogs | Dragon Glass Winery  
Front Porch Creamery | MidSummer Brewing | King Skate Factory | Linda Vista Mexican  
Luna's Mexican Kitchen | Liv For Swets | Market By Dragonfly | Moser Farm Market  
1889 Taphouse | Palmetto Theatre | Pilot Mountain Wedding & Events | Fun Time Arcade  
Rocky's Coffee & Ice Cream | Southern Charm Grill | StoCo Provisions | 311 Tavern



## TOP 2023 STOKES COUNTY EMPLOYERS

Rank	Company Name	Industry	Class	Employment Range
1	Stokes County Schools	Educational Services	Public Sector	500-999
2	County Of Stokes	Public Administration	Public Sector	250-499
3	Wal-Mart Associates Inc.	Retail Trade	Private Sector	250-499
4	Wieland Copper Products Llc	Manufacturing	Private Sector	100-249
5	Ymca Of Northwest North Carolina	Accommodation and Food Services	Private Sector	100-249
6	Food Lion	Retail Trade	Private Sector	100-249
7	Lifebrite Hospital Group Of Stokes	Health Care and Social Assistance	Private Sector	100-249
8	Autumn Corporation	Health Care and Social Assistance	Private Sector	100-249
9	Universal Health Care/King	Health Care and Social Assistance	Private Sector	100-249
10	Forsyth Technical College	Educational Services	Public Sector	50-99
11	Defender Services Inc	Administrative and Support and Waste Management	Private Sector	50-99
12	City Of King	Public Administration	Public Sector	50-99
13	Parkdale America Llc	Manufacturing	Private Sector	50-99
14	Insperty Peo Services Lp	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	Private Sector	50-99
15	Shoreline Healthcare Management Llc	Health Care and Social Assistance	Private Sector	50-99
16	Lowes Foods Llc	Retail Trade	Private Sector	50-99
17	Oasis Ahr Llc	Health Care and Social Assistance	Private Sector	50-99
18	Walnut Ridge Assisted Living	Health Care and Social Assistance	Private Sector	50-99
19	Dairi-O	Accommodation and Food Services	Private Sector	50-99
20	U S Postal Service	Transportation and Warehousing	Public Sector	50-99
21	Usa Attachments Inc	Manufacturing	Private Sector	50-99
22	Mcdonalds Restaurant	Accommodation and Food Services	Private Sector	50-99
23	Dolgencorp Llc	Retail Trade	Private Sector	50-99
24	Stewarts Grading And Hauling Inc	Construction	Private Sector	50-99
25	Town & Country Grille Llc	Accommodation and Food Services	Private Sector	50-99

DATA: NC Commerce Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Largest Employers - 2023 - Quarter 2

## EMPLOYMENT, OCCUPATIONS, AND WORKFORCE



Largest Industries: Manufacturing (3,948 people), Health Care & Social Assistance (2,648 people, and Retail Trade (2,162 people), and the highest paying industries are Utilities (\$70,169), Information (\$53,587), and Educational Services (\$48,022).



From 2020 to 2021, employment in Stokes County, NC declined at a rate of -4.74%, from 21.1k employees to 20.1k employees. The most common job groups, by number of people living in Stokes County, NC, are Office & Administrative Support Occupations (2,068 people), Production Occupations (1,774 people), and Installation, Maintenance, & Repair Occupations (1,635 people). This chart illustrates the share breakdown of the primary jobs held by residents of Stokes County, NC.

DATA: the Census Bureau ACS 5-Year Estimate

## STOKES COUNTY TOURISM STATISTICS

### 2022 County Level Visitor Spending

**\$51.29 Million**

10.7% Increase Over  
2021 Spending Total



### TAX REVENUES GENERATED

**2022**

**2021**



**2020**

**2019**



### Hanging Rock Visitation Statistics



2014: 480,938	2019: 689,379
2015: 596,819	2020: 908,384
2016: 651,942	2021: 935,823
2017: 672,611	2022: 879,657
2018: 678,896	2023: 904,589

Friends of the Sauratown Mountains began work on the Sheep Rock Ridge Trail connecting the State Park to Town of Danbury with a trailhead entering the parking lot behind The Arts Place of Stokes. The North Carolina budget allocated \$5 million to completion of the Vade Mecum project and bidding of the project began at the end of 2023.



## **ORGANIZATION MISSION, AND FUNCTION**

Stokes County Economic Development & Tourism proudly serves all county businesses from small, locally owned, who serve as the lifeline of each small community, to the medium and large manufacturing operations all of which employ and provide a means for quality of living to residents. The Department upholds a vital connection between industry and small businesses to local government, the state, and funders for incentives or projects that help to better our communities and towns. Business Retention, Development, Infrastructure and Quality of Life are key in helping maintain and create a path for future development helping to sustain Stokes County for future generations.

Looking to relocate, expand or develop your business in Stokes County? The Economic Development Team is committed to forming a specialized plan, helping make connections to assist in seeing your project to completion. Serving as the link to State and Local Resources or Grant Opportunities from local and state organizations including PTRC, Visit NC, Commerce, and EDPNC. We are proud to maintain the rural charm while encouraging Place Based Economic Development opportunities.

It is the goal of the Tourism arm to encourage visitation to Stokes County for Outdoor Adventure, Agricultural Rural Heritage, and Family Fun in the Mountains or along the River, via advertising statewide and regionally in a variety of mediums. Tourism Marketing brings awareness to area assets and encourages visitors to extend their visit and support local businesses while in the area. Marketing efforts lead visitors to online resources, smartphone app, or social media pages where visitors find up to date information on events and user generated content to show why #StokesROCKS

## **DEPARTMENT STRUCTURE**

In 2023 under the direction of Interim Economic Development Director Eddy McGee the teamwork concept became a strong focus for departmental structure and organization. The necessity of this was bought about at our first meeting with a local resident who wanted to venture into starting an RV Campground. The prospective business owner had done much research and had an idea on county departments to visit, his first step was to visit with Economic Development for ideas on what to include on the site to help showcase rural and agricultural heritage of Stokes County. The department was able to connect this future business owner with resources in the Stokes County School System and form a path that would help connect them to county departments for rezoning, inspections, sewer and water. After this initial case the director and analyst formed a one pager of "Tips for Starting a Business in Stokes County" a simple front and back document outlining which county departments to start and connect with along the business development phase, including Register of Deeds to file assumed business name, answers to questions about business license or permit needs, informs on business personal property listings with the Tax Office. Concluding with direction for Zoning, Inspections, Permits, and reasons to contact Environmental Health for water and septic needs in areas without public infrastructure. Throughout the year once a business owner contacted the department, we set up an initial face to face with



representatives from the Tax Office, Public Works, Planning & Zoning, Environmental Health, and County Managers Office depending on specific project needs.

### MAJOR NEW INVESTMENTS IN STOKES COUNTY

- Building Reuse Grant for expansion of Mitchell's Meat Processing Retail Space in the Meadows community paying out all \$10,000 of county match funding to the project. The county submitted reimbursement from NC Commerce of \$36,301.35 out of the \$200,000 matching funds grant.
- Continued development of the Meadows Community water project, including an additional \$15 million in funding from the State Budget to support Economic Growth providing the extra needed funding to complete expansion in the area served by previous state funding for this project.
- Dan River Mile Marker Project Engineering to promote safety and visitation to and along sections of the river. In October 2023 Stokes County Economic Development submitted a \$10,000 grant application to the Duke Energy Foundation's Vibrant Economies Grant Program, the department received the grant in an Award Announcement on December 18, 2023 at Pitzer Road Access.



### NOTABLE PROJECTS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN STOKES COUNTY

- 2022 Golden Leaf Site Identification Program Grant completed by Strategic Development Group was presented to Interim Director Eddy McGee identifying 7 exploration zones and 16 sites concentrated around incorporated areas of the county. McGee and Mabe helped rule out one property due to topography and collaborated with SBG to finalize the report.
- Moratock Bridge Replacement Project moved into full gear with an initial webinar with Ramey Kemp discussing the need to find offset land for project as the new location would be downstream from the old bridge and right of way would need to be purchased. The park falls under a LWCF land management agreement where federal funds were used to purchase the park property initially. This classification didn't allow for purchase of property with federal money that had already been purchased by federal funds. Economic Dev and Tax Office worked to identify and contact an adjacent landowner who agreed to work with us and the project engineers through property visits, surveying and purchase. New bridge plans bring the abutment back into Sheppard Mill road by cutting through the backstop of the Baseball field, to remedy this situation in accordance with LECF Guidelines a resolution to abandon the baseball field which included a Public Hearing was formed and scheduled. The solution was met with no opposition and passed to form a green space at Moratock. NC DOT Engineers and project managers at Ramey Kemp have commended the department for going above and beyond to be in front of and on top of keeping this project moving. A compliment attributed to collaborating and bringing together Public Works, Tax Office, and County Managers Office.

- The DM2 Sewer Expansion Agreement between Stokes County and City of King project was completed, and the company moved into their new building at beginning of 2023. Hosting a "Machining and A Meal" Community Day which included a tour on April 21, 2023.

## **2023 YEAR IN REVIEW**

- 2023 Visit North Carolina Tourism Conference provided an opportunity to collaborate with tourism partners, marketing firms and Visit NC representatives from across the state. Tourism and Marketing Coordinator, Tory Mabe, was able to meet with and pitch story and content ideas to media and statewide organizations and event planners who develop content that encourages visitors to an area to stay multiple days experiencing more in a regional area. Best practices and new trends for marketing and sharing content online or via social media on a more personal level to the prospective visitor, instead of at the visitor were discussed. VisitNC Marketing Co-Op opportunities were presented, and valuable connections made.
- Stokes County Occupancy Tax Establishment discussion began at the beginning of the year between Economic Development and Interim County Manager. In February a Resolution was approved by the Board of Commissioners and submitted to the General Assembly asking for authorization to collect and levy a room occupancy tax at the 6% rate on the overnight rental rate of all vacation rental and accommodation within the county. During the month of March, Interim County Manager Amber Brown and Economic Development Tech Analyst Tory Mabe attended and spoke at meetings of each of the three town or city commissioner boards. In person presentations were to share information collected overtime on the number of vacation rental properties, and estimated rates that the Stokes County Tax office, Mapping Department and Economic Development had estimated. The mapping office produced a full countywide map pin pointing each of the vacation rental properties, an average daily rate, contact information, and link to online reservations. Collaboration between Interim County Manager, Tax Office, and Economic Development continued throughout the year including consulting with Chris Cavanaugh of Magellan Strategy Group on best practices for collection of Occupancy Tax, ideas on projects that the I/3rd could be suggested to the Tourism Development Authority, and valuable information on number of members and whom they represent to be placed on the newly formed TDA. In late summer the General Assembly moved Occupancy Tax legislation into a committee vote, the Stokes County legislation passed into law mid-October. During the last quarter of 2023, the team met and formed a timeline for completion of the local Resolution levying the tax, formation of the TDA, and educational public meetings that all Vacation Rental Property owners would be invited to attend and hear a presentation from Chris Cavanaugh on his NC Occupancy Tax Report. Two public input presentations were scheduled for early January 2024, with a Public Hearing set for the first Commissioner Meeting of 2024, Resolution presentation at the second January Meeting, with initial collection of the tax to begin second quarter of 2024.

- Public Presentation of Economic Development & Tourism were set with Stokes



County Senior Services to present four different times to Senior Groups in King, Lawsonville, Francisco, and Walnut Cove. Tech Analyst Tory Mabe prepared an interactive presentation and set up at each satellite location where 30-40 people attended to hear updates and information on why Stokes County is attractive to visitors and prospective business development. Handouts were presented, feedback noted, and questions answered.

- Sauratown Mountains Scenic Byway Committee meetings with board of directors, and community input sessions planned in Danbury and Pilot Mountain. Input meetings are required in the Byway Bylaws and beneficial comments were received at each session. The Sauratown Mountain Scenic Byway was not selected for a National Byway Grant. The Scenic Byway Committee meets 3-4 times a year to plan projects along the route.
- Mitchell's Meat Processing Building Re-Use Grant continues as a partnership between NC Commerce and Stokes County where 5% match payments have been paid out after three submissions of \$3,600 in January, \$5,946.93 in March, and \$3,99.50 in July. Bi-annual reports are to be made to NC Commerce and have been completed upon the due dates of January 15th and July 15th. In September a reimbursement of \$36,301.35 was submitted for payment and approved after supplemental documentation of receipts and invoices in late October. Since this was the first submission from Commerce to Stokes County in the new fiscal year a Budget Amendment was required from Finance to reallocate \$200,000 into an Economic Grants line item. Funds received from Commerce are deposited and a check cut from County to Mitchell's Meats LLC each time a submission is made. To this point about 1/4th of the work has been completed on the Reuse Project.
- Stokes County Economic Development Attends High School Career Fairs at each of the three High Schools and Calvary Christian School during each school semesters in 2023. At each Career Fair, Tech Analyst Mabe sets up a table with information about Tourism and answers questions from students at each grade level on hospitality and the career paths that are available and fields of study that would benefit someone in college to hold such a role.
- Stokes County Summer Intern Program continues into year two with Katherine Byerly as a part-time summer intern. Katherine works to maintain social media accounts throughout the summer, developing graphics and content for each channel and assisting with any Ayer or graphic design needs for print or digital advertisements. Katherine developed weekly event brochures for distribution at the Hanging Rock Campground and local businesses, during this time she also developed brochures dedicated to each community in Stokes County.
- Attended the Outdoor Economy Conference held September 18-21 in Cherokee, NC at this conference was able to meet with and network with many companies located in NC who provide amenities or funding and support for outdoor recreation. Collaborated with other Piedmont communities and worked through

round table discussions about issues faced when developing and promoting quality of life activities available outdoors. Joined breakout sessions on trail and greenway development, and experienced the Sylva, NC social district in downtown Jackson County where many activity trails exist even for history. At this event we were able to meet up with Brice Mahoney of Pinnacle Outdoors to discuss opportunities.

- Site and Project Requests for Information on active project needs from EDPNC totaled 95 opportunities to submit. A key hindrance for Stokes County to submit a proposal continues to be distance to major interstate or highway, total square footage of available building needs requests of 100-200,000 sqft, infrastructure needs, or a site ready greenfield. Inventory of available vacant buildings remains low and areas of large tracts of land aren't zoned correctly for projects to move in and start as soon as they approve a request.

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## **Board of Elections**

### **Jason Perry, Board of Elections Director**

The Stokes County Board of Elections consists of five Board of Elections members, two full-time employees (director and deputy director), and two temporary part-time employees.

#### **Board Members**

Mike Pell, Chair

David Burge, Secretary

Jennie L. Hemrick, Member

Kimble McEachern, Member

Jack Johnson, Member

The director and deputy director manage the day-to-day operations of the Board of Elections office and conduct operations for all elections in the county, including special, municipal, county, state, and federal elections. The five-member county board is, among other responsibilities, tasked with general oversight of the office, as are the North Carolina State Board of Elections and Stokes County administration.

### **SUMMARY OF 2023 PROJECTS AND TASKS:**

- Conducted municipal elections for Town of Danbury, City of King, and City of Walnut Cove, including filing of candidates, pre-election and post-election testing and audits, management of the voting process (absentee by mail, early voting, and Election Day), candidate and voter inquiries, certification of elections, and post-election recounts of two contests; 1,082 ballots cast.

- Processed registrations for **1,670 new voters, 429 party affiliation changes, 445 county address changes.**
- Performed daily, weekly, and monthly list maintenance tasks (examples include removal of voters due to death, moved from county, or felony conviction); maintained computer database of **32,452** current voters and over **70,000** overall voter records.
- Performed biennial list maintenance of no-contact voters – removed **857** voters who have not had contact with elections office within time period of previous four federal elections, and did not respond to a mailing; sent a mailing to **1,284** voters who have not had contact with elections office within time period of previous two federal elections.
- Worked with county partners regarding renovations to the former bank building in Danbury, which is to be the new location of the Board of Elections office in 2024. Considerations at the new location include security, efficiency, and general needs of an elections office.
- Conducted security assessment of new elections office location with county partners and a Critical Infrastructure Specialist with the North Carolina Department of Public Safety
- Reassessed Election Day polling places, determining that current precincts are reasonably and efficiently serving the voters' interests.
- Conducted outreach and informed the public of role of Board of Elections at events such as King Rotary Club meeting.
- Implemented photo ID requirement, including ability to get an ID at elections office.
- Appointed five Board of Elections members to their 2023-25 term; appointed over 100 precinct officials to their 2023-25 term; worked on recruitment of new precinct officials.
- Conducted filing of 19 local candidates for 2024 elections
- Board of Elections director Jason Perry maintained state elections administrator certification. Board of Elections deputy director Cindy Turner began the process of earning certification.

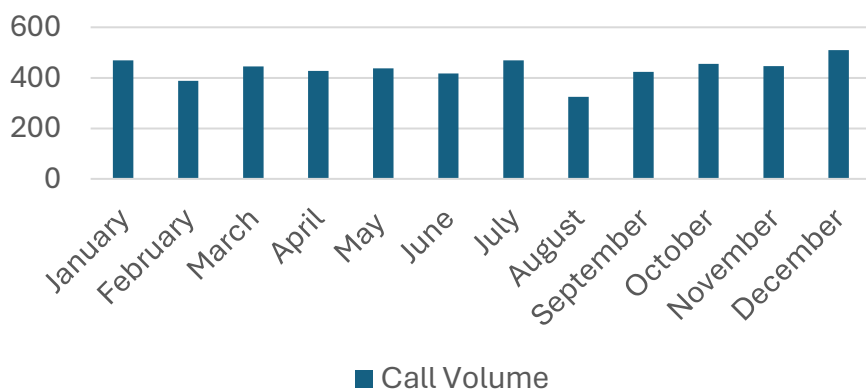
## Emergency Services

Brandon Gentry, Emergency Services Director

### 2023 CALL VOLUME



#### Call Volume for Emergency and Non-Emergency Transports



**Total Incidents – 11,065**

**Totals:**

- Emergency – 473
- Non-emergency – 4,911
- Assist – 54
- Cancelled – 504
- DOA's – 74
- Refusals – 1,681
- Stand-by's – 3,067
- EMS Service - 301

**68%**

**TRANSPORTS**

Percentage of Patient Encounters

**20%**

**NON TRANSPORTS**

Percentage of Patient Encounters

**9%**

**OTHER DISPOSITIONS**

Percentage of Patient Encounters

**7,777**

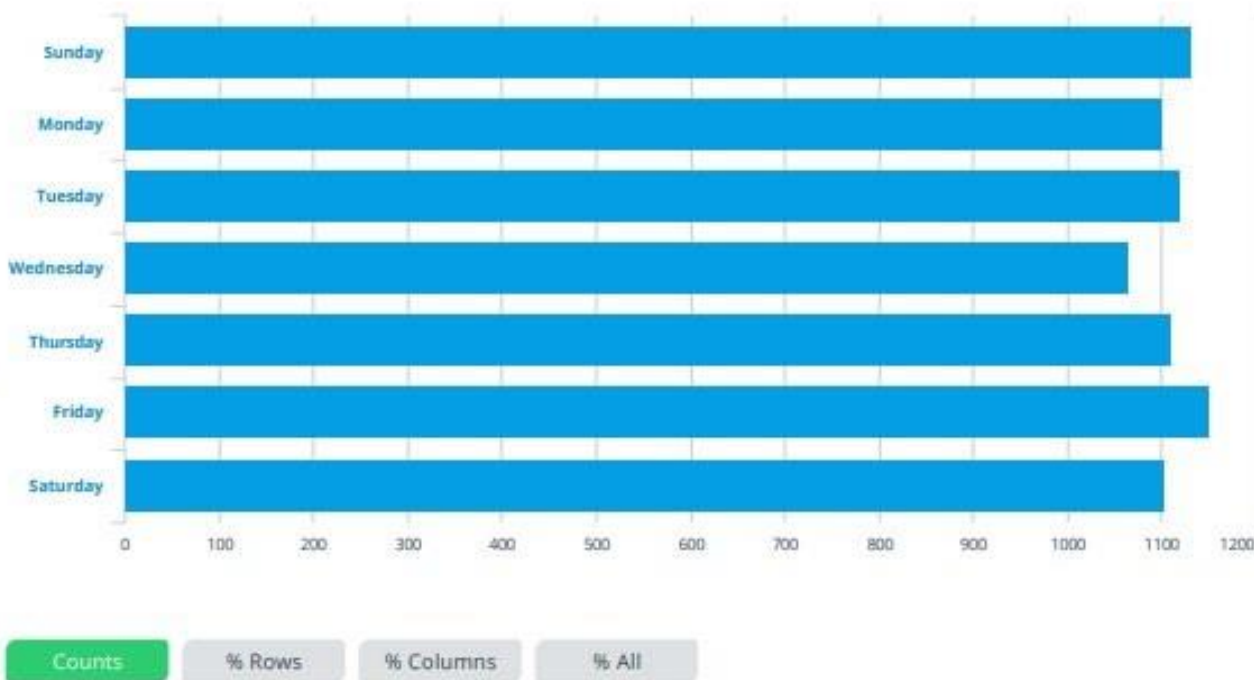
**RECORDS**

In Selected Time Slice

**365**

**DAYS**

In Selected Time Slice



The above chart consists of patient contact tickets and excludes stand-bys.



Call Volume by Day of the Week	
Sunday	1,131
Monday	1,099
Tuesday	1,120
Wednesday	1,064
Thursday	1,110
Friday	1,151
Saturday	1,102
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>7,777</b>

### EMS Stand-bys for Stokes County

(Out of County/County Transport Departments)

- Forsyth County EMS → 7
- Rockingham County EMS → 9
- Surry County EMS → 6
- Station 37 → 44
- Station 86 → 44
- Station 34 → 44

\*This consists of other counties running calls within Stokes County and the in-county transport units with the fire departments.

### EMS Stand-bys within the county

- Unit 1 → 637 (Walnut Cove)
- Unit 2 → 595 (Lawsonville)
- Unit 3 → 56 (King)
- Unit 4 → 53 (King)
- Unit 5 → 960 (Danbury)
- Unit 6 → 462 (Walnut Cove)

Average Transport Time to Hospitals – 29m:48s

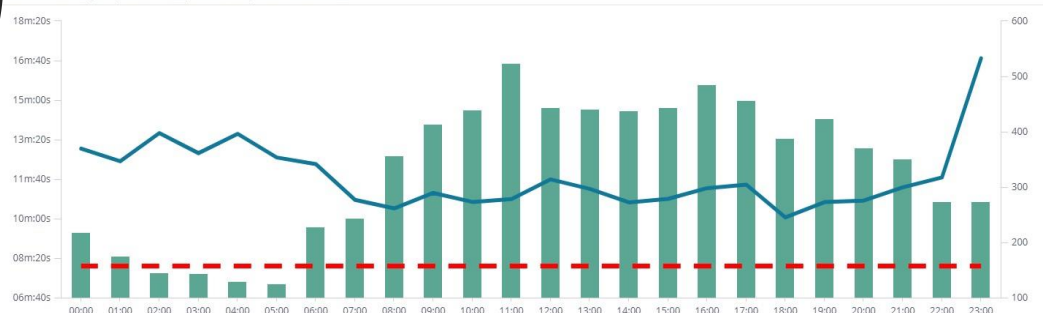
\*This consists of units moving within the County to cover areas when units are depleted

Rolling Response Time by Unit copy



Average Response Time within the county 11 m: 27 s

Dual Axis Rolling Response Time by Hour of Day and Total Patients



## FACILITIES EMS TRANSPORTED TO:

Count and Percentage of Incidents at each Destination

Destination Location Name	Count of Incidents	Percent of Incidents	Median Turnaround Time	Turnaround Time 90th Percentile
FORSYTH MEDICAL CENTER	2,858	52.93%	17m:26s	26m:39s
ATRIUM WAKE FOREST BAPTIST HEALTH	1,492	27.63%	17m:38s	29m:07s
LIFEBRITE COMMUNITY HOSPITAL OF STOKES	360	6.67%	13m:59s	23m:24s
Northern Regional Hospital	261	4.83%	14m:46s	23m:07s
KERNERSVILLE MEDICAL CENTER	200	3.70%	14m:53s	21m:27s
MOSES CONE HEALTH SYSTEM	54	1.00%	21m:58s	38m:14s
ANNIE PENN HOSPITAL	42	0.78%	19m:23s	35m:47s
CLEMMONS MEDICAL CENTER	34	0.63%	13m:09s	21m:25s
UNC Rockingham Health Care	27	0.50%	16m:59s	31m:45s
WESLEY LONG COMMUNITY HOSPITAL	17	0.31%	20m:00s	39m:20s
Walnut Cove HealthCare	7	0.13%	13m:03s	16m:24s
MOUNTAIN VALLEY LIVING CENTER	7	0.13%	09m:20s	14m:36s
HIGH POINT REGIONAL HEALTH SYSTEM	4	0.07%	19m:55s	28m:06s
Walnut Ridge Assisted Living	4	0.07%	08m:22s	11m:15s
Home	3	0.06%	10m:38s	12m:13s
WOLTZ HOSPICE HOME	3	0.06%	12m:49s	36m:39s
HUGH CHATHAM MEMORIAL HOSPITAL	2	0.04%	19m:27s	19m:57s
Village Care of King	2	0.04%	16m:02s	18m:18s
Residence	2	0.04%	07m:20s	10m:58s
Priddy Manor Asst. Living	2	0.04%	09m:44s	10m:39s
Forsyth medical center	1	0.02%	18m:26s	18m:26s
Private Residences	1	0.02%	34m:00s	34m:00s
Universal Health Care	1	0.02%	13m:29s	13m:29s
Walnut Ridge Assisted Living	1	0.02%	06m:33s	06m:33s
DAYMARK BEHAVIORAL HEALTH URGENT CARE	1	0.02%	12m:02s	12m:02s
Grand Total	5,400	100.00%	17m:01s	27m:18s

## 2023 EMERGENCY SERVICE STATISTICS

- **5,629** doses of medication given
- **113** patients for advanced airway intubations
- **91** patients that a ventilator was applied to
- **3,690** patients where advanced cardiac procedures were needed (includes cardioversion, cardiac pacing, defibrillation, and 12 lead EKG
- IV and IO access: **3,567 patients**
- Whole blood administration – **six times**
- TXA Administration – **14 times**
- Ancef Administration – **21 times**
- Cardiac Arrest Survival:
  - 13 cardiac arrests with return of spontaneous circulation
  - All **13 returned home** or to a facility with minor neuro deficiencies.

## TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

- Cardiac emergencies
- Rapid sequence intubation
- Trauma Bag in-service
- Ventilator training
- Wilderness training at Hanging Rock State Park
- Active shooter training





- Active shooter multiple agency training
- EMS Olympics at FTCC King Campus – Fire tower evolutions
- Each employee had **nine hours** of on-duty training this year
- Each employee receives **32 hours of continuing education training**



## COMMUNITY PARAMEDIC PROGRAM DATA

### Data 2019-2023

	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Behavioral/Psychiatric	267	254	347	371	307	1,546
Overdose/Substance Abuse	116	172	222	218	148	876
Suicide Attempt/Suicidal Ideation	27	26	46	43	41	183
EMS Narcan	53	108	114	150	119	544
POV Narcan	-	-	381	150	414	945
Referrals	231	450	337	381	335	1,734

**High Utilizers of EMS System**  
**≥ 4 utilizations/month = 12**

**Number of total refusal calls = 1,681**

**Number of total refusal calls reviewed by Community Paramedic = 360**

**Number of active cases currently managed by Community Paramedic = 35**  
**(458 Referrals in 2023)**

**Number of home visits by Community Paramedic = 68**

**Number of transports to alternative destinations by Community Paramedic = 3**

**Number of public education events delivered by Community Paramedic = 51**

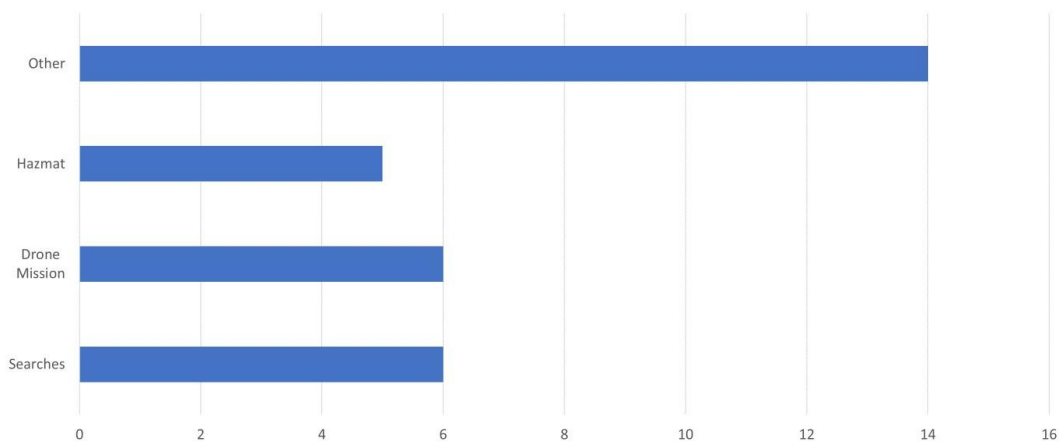
## EMS REVENUE

For 2023, **\$2,618,844.70** was collected in revenue from EMS with \$751,927.69 of write-off, non-billable amounts.

329 transports were started in Stokes County for LifeStar calls. This number does not include number of transports that were brought back to Stokes County from out of county hospitals.

## EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

EM responses in 2023.



### Emergency Management Grants 2023

- **DPR Fuel Caddy Grant 4,000.00** Placed portable fuel tank on EM truck. This grant is complete.
- **LEPC Grant for 3,000.00** This was used to help buy tables and chairs for the new EOC. This grant is complete.
- **The department was awarded the 2023 CBCG grant to upgrade the EOC with a total of 294,000.00.** We are still working to complete this grant with a deadline of July 1, 2024.



## Stokes County Emergency Management Assets



Capacity Building  
Competitive Grant



Awarded  
\$306,578.24



2022

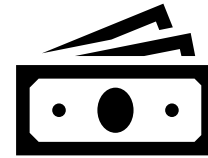




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## Finance

**Lisa Lankford, Finance Director**



### **STAFF:**

Lisa Lankford, Finance Director

Tracy Aaron, Assistant Finance Director

Lisa Joyce, Payroll Specialist

Michele Mabe, Finance Accounting Technician

Debra Nall, Finance Accounting Technician/Accounts Payable

### **MISSION**

To provide sound, financial oversight of the county's transactions handled in accordance with laws and standards. To provide timely and accurate information and ensure fiscal accountability.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES**

A few duties performed by the Finance Department are listed below:

- Maintain detailed account records by fund for all county departments including assets, liabilities, budgeted and actual revenues and budgeted and actual expenditures.
- Supervising receipts, deposits and investment of cash.
- Reconciliation of all county bank accounts.
- Approving all invoices and contracts prior to payment.
- Maintaining expenditure records for all county grants.
- Preparing financial reports for Federal and State agencies.
- Facilitating the annual county audit.
- Compilation of the annual county budget under the direction of the Board of County Commissioners and County Manager.

### **2023 HIGHLIGHTS**

- Managed numerous awards and grants.
- Issued **7,694** Accounts Payable checks.
- Entered, along with county departments, **22,087** cash, checks, and credit card receipts.
- Posted **1,825** General Journal entries.

### **2024 GOALS**

- Continue improving processes for better operating procedures.
- Finish completing the new Finance software conversion with a target date of November 2024.
- Extend training to departments on the new Finance software conversion.
- Continue to improve cross-training within Finance for increased efficiency.

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## Fire Marshal

### Scott Aaron, Fire Marshal

The Fire Marshal's Office has continued to be proactive in the County. We strive to streamline operations while providing the best service we can to the citizens of Stokes County. While transitioning reporting systems, we noticed some of the former reports were no longer available, so we are changing our documentation process. I have included a report that shows a breakdown of responses. See data and information below referencing our office's functions and response.



### INSPECTIONS

- Inspections performed: 170 Initial Inspections
- Re-inspections: 96
- Not counting Inspections performed in the Town of Walnut Cove prior to July 2023.
- Total Violations: 252
- Total Fines Collected: \$2,525.00
- Permit Fees: \$1,500.00
- Fire Report Fees: \$140.00

### FIRE RESPONSE

- Emergency Responses: 230

### PLAN REVIEW

- New Construction and Existing Plan Review
- Electronic Plan Review

### EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- Scene Responses: We responded to multiple calls with EM for assistance from logistical needs to Incident Command roles.
- Grant Writing: We assisted EM Director Brandon Gentry with writing and completing grants from Emergency Management.
- Equipment Maintenance: We perform weekly and monthly preventative maintenance on all EM equipment.

### TRAINING HOURS

- Fire: We attend and assist with training at the local fire departments, and other training opportunities.

- EMS Con-Ed: We attend quarterly con-ed with EMS
- Arson: We attend training and take online courses monthly to maintain hours for our Arson Certifications.
- Inspections: All employees are required to attend continuing education to maintain certifications. Atherton Jessup completed his level 2 Fire Inspector, obtained his Probationary Level 3 Inspector
- Conferences Attended:
  - 40 hours NC International Arson Investigators Training seminar
  - 40 hours International Arson Investigators Training seminar

## FIRE DEPARTMENT SUPPORT

- Fire and Rescue Association Meetings.
- Fire Commission Meetings.
- Research and Development of a new County Contract.
- Study and propose a plan to help with staffing needs of Fire Service.
- Provide information and support in ISO rate reduction processes.

## OSHA/SAFETY

- Safety and Accident Review Committee meetings.
- OSHA Consultative Program saving the County thousands in possible OSHA fines.
- Assist county departments with training needs.

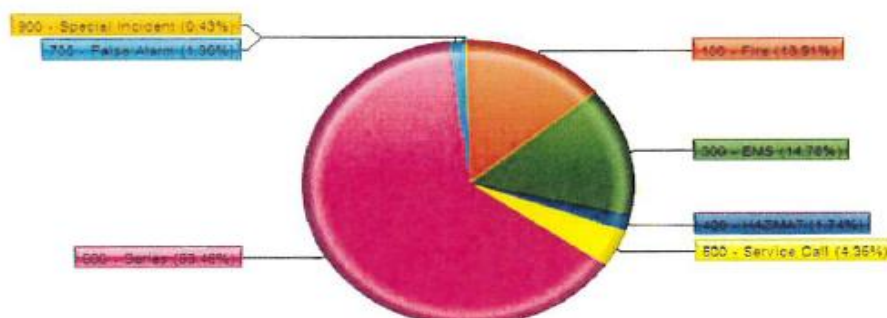
## PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Fire Extinguisher Trainings for local businesses.
- Public Education events across the county.
- Fire Prevention training for schools and materials for Fire Prevention Week.

Fire - Incident Types		Date: Tuesday, January 30, 2024
		Time: 8:12:11 PM
Alarm Date between	2023-01-01	and 2024-01-01

Fire Incident Type Breakdown

Incident Type Group	
100 - Fire	32
300 - EMS	34
400 - HAZMAT	4
500 - Service Call	10
600 - Series	146
700 - False Alarm	3
900 - Special Incident	1
	230



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# Health Department

**Tammy Martin, Health Director**

## **MISSION**

*"To promote health and safe living, prevent disease, care for the sick, protect the environment and provide essential services to meet community needs."*



## **Board Members**

Amber Hairford, Licensed Physician  
Steven Jones, Licensed Engineer  
Tim Mabe, Licensed Dentist  
Beverly Essick, Registered Nurse  
Ross Kiser, Licensed Pharmacist  
Ashley O'Steen, General Public  
Keith Lawson, General Public  
Chad Jarvis, General Public  
Sonya Cox, Commissioner  
Amber Brown, County Manager  
Tammy Martin, Health Director  
Hayley Shelton, Recording Secretary

The Health Department hired Dr. Cassidy-Vu in a full-time capacity as a provider and is also the Medical Director. With this we were able to offer MAT (medication assisted therapy) for patients that may not have many options as to where to seek treatment. There has been an increase in patients with our having two providers.

We had new BOH (Board of Health) members appointed throughout the beginning of 2023. This BOH has taken on an active role in advocating for more resources as well as education opportunities for the department. Our department along with EMS and the community paramedics have begun the process to offer a MAT Bridge Program for Stokes County. There was a lot of discussion around Opioid Settlement funds with possible avenues that could be taken to help the citizens the most. With the MAT services being offered here, we have started dispensing Narcan to those that are in the program. There is discussion of the need for a mental health provider in our clinic.

In November of 2023, our Employee Health Clinic began for county employees and their families. We offer care to those with our MedCost plan for a \$0 copay. There has been a tremendous increase in our patients with this change as well. The Health Department along with the BOH are looking at more ways to advertise and promote our services to the community.

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## Human Resources

**Jamie Clark, HR Director**

### **STAFF**

Jamie Clark, HR Director

Donna Rogers, Assistant HR Director/Risk Management Coordinator

To summarize, 2023 was a year of change for the Human Resources department. New procedures and software were implemented to increase productivity and efficiency for HR staff and for county employees. Tasks were assigned by the Board of Commissioners that resulted in changes in the new-hire process as well as future changes pertaining to employee evaluations and possibly merit-pay. Lastly, the department underwent many personnel changes at the end of the year. We foresee more changes in 2024. We are setting goals with hopes to decrease response times, boost employee morale, modernize employee new-hire and exit processes, increase streamlining, minimize risk, save time, and much more.

**Background Check Policy** – The HR department drafted a Background Check policy that was approved by the BOCC. We have partnered with the Background Investigation Bureau (BIB). Once a final candidate is selected for a position, they are sent login information to the BIB portal where they agree to a criminal background check and provide all the information needed to obtain the background check. BIB sends the results to the HR department within 24-48 hours.

**Employee Performance Evaluation** – The HR department drafted an Employee Performance Evaluation policy, Support Form, Evaluation Form, and a Checklist for managers to review Employee Performance Evaluations that was approved by the BOCC. The County Manager is currently working with Department Heads to complete their Support Forms. It is our understanding that the Evaluation Process will begin for all employees in 2024. We plan to work closely with all departments during the evaluation process.

**Group New Hire Orientation** – To decrease the amount of time that our staff met one-on-one with new employees, we began a group new-hire orientation process. Department Heads were sent a list of dates that orientation is offered throughout the year. The orientation agenda includes filling out all new-hire paperwork, a 401K informational segment, employee handbook review, a live webinar with Cypress Benefit Solutions to go over employee benefits and issuing of employee ID badges.

**Employee Exit Questionnaire** – This year the HR department revamped the Employee Exit Questionnaire. The data collected from this questionnaire is entered into a spreadsheet so that we can better track and understand the reason for turnover within each department.



**Paylocity** – The major task taken on by the department this year is the implementation of the new payroll and HR software, Paylocity. We have attended numerous online webinars and training courses to prepare for this undertaking. We meet with the implementation team 2-3 times a week via Zoom. We went live with employee punches on December 23<sup>rd</sup> and the first payroll through Paylocity was on January 26<sup>th</sup>. We felt like everything went very well. We are excited to learn all the things Paylocity will offer. We hope that the system will streamline many of our processes and provide reports that we have never been able to easily access in the past.

**Employee Health Clinic** – We have been working very hard over the last couple of years with MedCost, CBS and the Stokes County Health Department to open an Employee Health Clinic for our employees and their families. We began November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. All county employees, and their families on the county's health plan can visit the clinic with a \$0 co-pay!

**Personnel Changes** – 20+ Year veteran, Gayle Tucker retired from the position of HR Director. Jamie Clark, previous Assistant HR Director, was promoted to her position. Donna Rogers, who was the previous Assistant Register of Deeds, was promoted to the Assistant HR Director position. The team is adjusting well to their new positions and to the new payroll/HR software.

**Employment Law Class** – Director Jamie Clark completed the Employment Law class with Diane Juffras through the NC School of Government in November.

## **STATISTICAL DATA**

- **2023 Workers Compensation Data:**
  - 32 Total Employee Incidents (11 refused medical treatment)
  - 21 OSHA Recordable Incidents

## **Why are employees leaving Stokes County?**

- The data below was collected by Employee Exit Questionnaires, completed by 46 employees who voluntarily resigned in 2023.
  - 11 - Better Pay
  - 11 - Retirement
  - 7 - Family Circumstances
  - 7 - More Affordable Family Insurance
  - 6 - Better Work Conditions
  - 5 - Dissatisfied with pay/hours/type of work
  - 4 - Return to School
  - 3 - Due to Upper Management
  - 1 - Moving out of the area



## EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

Department	YTD Term EE's	Approved Full-time	Approved Part-	Total Employees	Turnover Rate
Administration	2	2	1	3	66.67%
Human Resources	1	2	0	2	50.00%
Finance	1	4.5	0	4.5	22.22%
Purchasing	0	1.5	0	1.5	0.00%
Tax/Mapping/GIS	2	16	1	17	11.76%
Elections	0	2	0	2	0.00%
Register of Deeds	1	4	0	4	25.00%
Public Buildings	2	18	2.5	20.5	9.76%
I.T. Systems	2	3	0	3	66.67%
Vehicle Maintenance	1	2	0	2	50.00%
Sheriffs Department	13	58	14	72	18.06%
Jail	12	32	10	42	28.57%
DRC	1	4	0	4	25.00%
Emergency Communications	6	14	10	24	25.00%
Emergency Managment	0	1	0	1	0.00%
Fire Marshal	1	3	0	3	33.33%
EMS	25	42	37	79	31.65%
Animal Control	8	9	0	9	88.89%
Solid Waste	11	8	40.5	48.5	22.68%
Planning	2	6	0	6	33.33%
Economic Development/Tourism	0	2	0	2	0.00%
Natural Resources/Soil & Water	0	2	0	2	0.00%
Health Department	2	29	4	33	6.06%
Social Services	15	81	0	81	18.52%
Veterans Services	0	2	0	2	0.00%
Senior Services	1	9	0	9	11.11%
Art Council	0	3	0	3	0.00%
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>480</b>	<b>22.71%</b>

## 2023 Job Postings:

- Administration – 1
- Animal Control – 7
- Emergency Communications – 2
- Senior Services – 3
- DRC – 2
- Environmental Health – 1
- Fire Marshal – 1
- Information Systems – 3
- Human Resources – 2
- Veterans Services – 1
- Vehicle Maintenance – 2
- EMS – 9
- Social Services – 20
- Health – 5
- Planning – 3
- Public Building – 2
- Solid Waste – 1
- Register of Deeds – 1
- Tax – 2

**Total Job  
Postings:  
68**

## EMPLOYEE TENURE

We currently have 38 employees eligible for retirement with 20 + years of service. 22 eligible with 25+ years of service, and 8 with 30+ years of service.

	Department Description	Tenure (In English)
1	Senior Citizens	31 Year(s) & 10 Month(s)
2	Social Services	29 Year(s) & 5 Month(s)
3	Tax	32 Year(s)
4	Sheriff's Department	35 Year(s) & 11 Month(s)
5	Tax	31 Year(s) & 1 Month(s)
6	Public Buildings	28 Year(s) & 7 Month(s)
7	Mapping	36 Year(s)
8	Social Services	26 Year(s) & 4 Month(s)
9	Sheriff's Department	36 Year(s) & 9 Month(s)
10	Social Services	25 Year(s) & 2 Month(s)
11	Register of Deeds	24 Year(s) & 10 Month(s)
12	Natural Resources	28 Year(s)
13	Social Services	27 Year(s) & 4 Month(s)
14	Sheriff's Department	31 Year(s) & 11 Month(s)
15	EMS	26 Year(s) & 8 Month(s)
16	Tax	25 Year(s) & 1 Month(s)
17	Tax	27 Year(s)
18	Social Services	20 Year(s) & 3 Month(s)
19	Social Services	33 Year(s) & 3 Month(s)
20	Emergency Management	22 Year(s) & 1 Month(s)
21	Tax	29 Year(s)
22	Tax	23 Year(s) & 11 Month(s)
23	Jail	23 Year(s) & 8 Month(s)
24	Finance	23 Year(s) & 7 Month(s)
25	Social Services	23 Year(s) & 7 Month(s)
26	Environmental Health	22 Year(s) & 5 Month(s)
27	Mapping	22 Year(s) & 5 Month(s)
28	Health Department	22 Year(s) & 5 Month(s)
29	EMS	21 Year(s) & 4 Month(s)
30	Solid Waste	21 Year(s) & 7 Month(s)
31	Sheriff's Department	20 Year(s) & 7 Month(s)
32	Environmental Health	20 Year(s) & 3 Month(s)
33	Purchasing	20 Year(s) & 1 Month(s)
34	Health Department	20 Year(s)
35	Health Department	20 Year(s)
36	Emergency Communications	33 Year(s) & 5 Month(s)
37	Mapping	27 Year(s)
38	Sheriff's Department	26 Year(s)

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## Information Technology

### Ken Farmer, IT Director

#### STAFF

Ken Farmer, IT Director

Mike Schaper

Lee Edwards

2023 was a year of new change and growth in the IT Department. During the Summer of 2023, two long-term highly experienced employees retired after both serving 30+ years. Ken Farmer was selected as IT Director and was tasked with keeping the department afloat and bringing the County up to date with technologies and services that could be provided to employees for better service of citizens. Department employees Lee Edwards and Mike Schaper have hit the ground running and continue to be a great asset for the County during the transition and moving forward.

In addition to the 30 +/- routine tech support issues IT deals with daily, the below items were accomplished since late summer of 2023:

- Hired and familiarized two new employees.
- Removed/palletized 30+ workstations/displays.
- Laserfiche upgrade to entire Department of Social Services
- eFileCabinet upgrade to Revver for Sheriff's Dept.
- Assisted HR/Payroll with upgrade to Paylocity
- Setup small wireless network in Health Dept.
- Setup wireless and wired network at Autumn Square
- Researched and negotiated contract with Panasonic for 10+ laptops
- Researched and negotiated contract for for Cisico ASA upgrade
- Researched and negotiated contract for Fatpipe upgrade (installing next week)
- Researched and negotiated contract Southern upgrade
- Migrated local Active Directory Distribution Groups to Microsoft Entra

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## Planning and Inspections

### Eric Nance, Planning and Inspections Director

In 2023 we issued 1,118 permits which translates to \$284,180.79 in revenue for the year. Comparing 2022 revenue at \$236,873.74 with 2023 revenue there was a difference of \$47,307.05.

I relate the difference being due to the increase in fees as of July 1, 2023. Since the increase it seems our contractors and public are accepting the fees, which allows us to pursue upgrades and positive changes in our Planning and Inspections office.

Since I came on board with the Planning and Inspections department in February 2023 we have implemented a fee increase that has not happened in approximately 20 years, we have established a computer at the front counter with a monitor for the public to view when we look at properties for zoning as well as creating permits, established a new temporary RV ordinance and permit to allow the public to live on the property while their building permits are in effect. We have rezoned several properties to allow for business, one being a mini farm truck business, another being a building for a snack cake business, as well as a glamping campground to help serve as a place for vacationers to stay and spend money in Stokes County. We also rezoned a property to give a homeowner the means to have their own workshop and allow for farm animals. One of our goals for the year has been to make upgrades to our permitting system and technology to make it easier for our contractors and taxpayers to get their permits and to increase office efficiency for personnel. This new system will give Contractors and taxpayers an online portal with which to apply for their permits, it will guide them through the process from start to finish sending them updates on their permit status, and to let them know if there is more information to be provided to the permit office. With inspectors having the means through a tablet in the field to automatically upload inspection reports with automated messaging to the contractor/homeowner, it allows for quicker response time and less time updating files in the office. This process allows better communication and does away with outdated paper filing and the need for space which increases efficiency and accuracy in permitting. It is my understanding that we have gone through the financing process for the package and are ready to go ahead with the purchase. Along with the permitting software we are in the process of upgrading our plan review process with new technology through the savings of our permitting software package. We recently added a new Office Manager/Permitting Technician and a new Permitting Technician with Julie Potter (Office Manager/Permitting Technician) and Kathy Landreth (Permitting Technician). We are very happy to welcome Julie and Kathy to our team! We will soon be implementing a monthly departmental meeting to help keep our team on track with our goals and to expand on any concerns or ideas to make the department run smoothly as we want to make sure that our department serves the Stokes County community to the best of our ability.

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## **Public Works/Solid Waste**

**Stewart Easter, Public Works Director**

### **PUBLIC BUILDINGS**

- Replaced HVAC units and control system for the Department of Social Services
- Installed and finished new floors, painting, and cabinets for the Health Department
- Mr. Danny Mabe retired after many years in Maintenance.

### **SOLID WASTE**

- Green Box sites were remodeled at both the Pinnacle and Walnut Cove locations which has increased safety of sites and efficiency in operations.
- The Transfer Station at Sizemore Road was paved to provide easier access.
- Addition of concrete around Green Box sites
- Purchase of new Garbage Truck
- Mr. Harry France, a long-term employee, retired from the County in Solid Waste as the supervisor.
- Employee Mr. Kenny Bullins was promoted to Solid Waste Supervisor with Mr. France's retirement.

### **EARLY COLLEGE**

- The flooring was replaced in Pod B at the Early College
- The fence surrounding the garbage container was rebuilt.
- A State inspection was performed on the water system and there were no violations found.

### **MORATOCK PARK**

- A new guardrail was installed around the park lot areas.
- Six new picnic tables were added to the park.
- New Dan River access was opened with cooperation between Stokes County and the NCWRC

### **STOKES COUNTY WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY**

- Land was purchased for the use of a new water tower.
- Progress was made on water projects with easements and engineering.
- Several new customers were added to the services.
- State inspections were performed, and no violations were found.
- New excavators were purchased and are being used for water repairs.

### **DANBURY WATER**

- Limited progress was made on a water main replacement through the engineering firm.
- Generators were added to both well locations.
- State inspections were performed, and no violations were found.

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## Purchasing & Project Management

### Glenda Pruitt, Purchasing/Project Manager

The purchasing department has had a busy year with several departments receiving grant funding. There have been several equipment and supply purchases, as well as several renovations and relocations.

Issued PO's **614**

Tax Surplus Property Revenue **\$19,905.84**

Surplus Property Revenue **\$1,406.04**

Enterprise was able to locate replacement vehicles for Animal Control and Public Works. We continue to work on ordering possibilities for the Sheriff's fleet.

Below are the construction projects that I continue to work on and the status:

- Design Build project for the renovations on Main Street Danbury- The contractor has been awarded.
- Renovations for the Board of Elections- Colt Simmons Construction is working on renovations.
- Courthouse addition & renovations- Relocation of the helipad is taking place. Once relocated NCDOT has been contracted to complete the new parking area. Peterson/Gordon Architects are working on bid documents.
- Animal Shelter- Invitation to Bid for demolition has been posted. Public Works Director Stewart Easter and I are working with various departments that have items stored at the old prison for a plan of action for removal.

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## Register of Deeds

### Brandon Hooker, Register of Deeds

- We began electronically filing maps. With that addition, we now accept every type of real estate document electronically, setting us up for the future. We have had 3 local surveyors sign up to take advantage of this new recording method.
- We finalized an 18-month back-indexing project with Courthouse Computer Systems, which will improve access to records from 1993 back to 1979. I am hopeful that we'll have the new index data integrated into our database soon.

- We digitized all highway project maps, which date back to the late 60's. They are one of the last set of records that were not digitized. We should have these available online soon.
- We also preserved and digitized marriage licenses from 1880-1883 and the 1884-1886 box is currently at the preservation lab. We have about 30 years of these licenses left to complete the digitization of all marriage licenses we have. Once these are complete, all marriage licenses from 1900 back to 1839 will also be preserved in new sleeves and binding...keeping them from deteriorating.
- In August, I hosted a genealogy workshop with great attendance.
- We had some personnel changes. Losing Deputy Judy Puckett and Assistant Donna Rogers. I hired Mrs. Cynthia Collins and Ms. Kim Overstreet for those two positions, respectively.

### **2023 Financial & Transaction Figures**

Total Revenue: **\$649,299.50**

Total Transactions: **11,900**

# of Land Records Indexed: **6,212**

Total Maps Recorded: **267**

Notary Oaths Administered: **154**

Certified Vital Record Copies Issued: **2,864**

Recorded Birth Certificates: **9**

Recorded Death Certificates: **410**

Marriage Licenses Issued: **256**

Military Discharges Recorded: **33**

Assumed Business Names Recorded: **321**

Electronic Filing Percentage: **76.88%**

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## **Senior Services**

**Vicky East, Senior Services Director**

### **WALNUT COVE SENIOR CENTER**

- Grants Received- Senior Center General Purpose - \$10,901.00. This funding pays for programs and activities.
- Senior Center Operations (Home Community Care Block Grant Funds)- \$45,202.00. This funding pays for the salary of the county employee working here.
- Senior Center Expanded Services Grant (ARPA)- \$40,000.00. This funding pays for programs in outlying areas of the county such as Francisco, Lawsonville, Sandy Ridge, Pine Hall, and Danbury. ARPA Ends September 2024.



- Number of clients served by Walnut Cove Senior Center in 2023 → **205**.
- Walnut Cove Senior Center received their 5<sup>th</sup> Re-certification as Senior Center of Excellence on February 16, 2023.

## SENIOR SERVICES

- Grants received- Home Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG)
  - Congregate Meals – \$25,867.00 – 63 clients served – 3,662 meals served.
  - Home Delivered Meals – \$199,334.00 – 208 clients served – 32,156 meals served.
  - To serve a client meal for one year the cost is approximately \$1,900.00.
  - Transportation – General – \$26,722.00 – 47 clients served – 1,167 trips.
  - Transportation – Medical – \$89,348.00 – 67 clients served – 1,014 trips.
- ARPA Grant: Congregate Meals Frozen Pick - up Program Sandy Ridge & Francisco – \$24,328.00 – 143 clients served.
- ARPA Grant – Home Delivered Meals – \$56,692.00 – 21 clients served - YTD 310 meals.
- SHIIP (Senior Health Insurance Information Program)
  - SHIIP Base Grant – \$4,333.00
  - SHIIP MIPPA (Medicare Improvements for Patients & Providers Act - Grant – \$3,178.00
- Insurance Counseling provided by our County SHIIP Coordinator during open enrollment October 14, 2023 – December 7, 2023.
- February 2023- The Area Agency on Aging Monitored Stokes Senior Services on all Services paid for by ARPA Grant and Home Community Care Block Grant. Stokes County Senior Services was compliant on all Services.
- June 2023 - Senior Services served 50 Clients with the Farmers Market Voucher Program. Each client received \$50.00 in Farmers Market Vouchers to purchase fresh produce, from local Farmers Markets.
- July-August-2023. 20 clients were served with Operation Heat Relief. Purchased 20 fans with funds provided by The Area Agency on Aging, a grant from Duke Energy Carolinas.
- Provided Legal Assistance to 36 clients from July – December 2023 through a partnership with YVEDDI.
- September 2023, Senior Services had an employee to retire after 20 years of service to Stokes County, Ms. Linda Fulscher.
- Senior Services currently has eight employees, with one job vacancy.

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## Sheriff's Office

### Joey Lemons, Stokes County Sheriff

- Our office responded to or initiated **37,399 calls for service** from January 1, 2023- December 31, 2023.



- Our office served **1978 civil processes** issued by the courts, to include summons', Writs of Execution, and Domestic Violence Protection Orders.
- We were granted two additional Detention Officer positions by the Board of County Commissioners.
- Increased salary of Detention Officers to be in line with that of a Deputy Sheriff by budget ordinance passed by the BOCC.
- Generated **\$491,340.94** in jail revenue through housing other counties' inmates, participation in the State Misdemeanant Confinement Program, and commissions. (\*\*\*)Please note that this number does not fully reflect the month of December 2023 as we are still awaiting payments which should be in by the end of January 2024.)
- Collected and secured **1,193** articles of new evidence in criminal cases.
- Created and held first ever Citizens Academy.
- Created an Internet Safety Presentation for parents and children.
- Implementation of In-Car Video systems, along with internet access in all patrol vehicles.
- Replaced all service pistols for full-time personnel through a state grant.

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## Social Services

**Stacey Elmes, DSS Director**

### Board Members

Jan Spencer, Chair

Darlene Bullins, Vice Chair

Greg Collins, Member

Sonya Cox, Member

Sandy Smith, Member

### ADULT SERVICES

- 86 Adult Protective Services (APS) reports received.
- 40 APS reports were evaluated.
- 30 visits were made to offer services to families experiencing a need for adult social work services.
- 100% of APS reports were initiated timely.
- Court appointed guardian for 33 individuals to ensure the individual's health and safety needs were met.
- Representative Payee for 7 individuals to ensure their basic needs for food, clothing, and shelter were met.
- 6 assisted living facilities were monitored to ensure compliance with state and federal rules.
- 59 elderly and disabled adults received In-Home Aide services enabling them to remain in their own homes.

- 60 individuals received Special Assistance In-Home services to assist with advanced needs, enabling them to avoid out-of-home placement.
- 60 adults received services from the Community Alternatives Program for Disabled Adults (CAP/DA), enabling them to remain safely in their home.
- 275 families received benefits in Crisis Intervention/Emergency Assistance funds to meet a life threatening or health related heating or cooling emergency.
- 404 families received a one-time benefit in Low Income Energy Assistance (LIEAP) funds to assist in meeting heating or cooling needs.

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

- 266 Child Protective Services (CPS) reports were received.
- 141 CPS reports involving 256 children were accepted for investigation or assessment.
- An average of 18 cases per month were open for Case Management services.
- 19 new children entered Foster Care.
- A total of 98 children were served in Foster Care.
- 3 new Foster Homes were licensed.
- 15 foster homes were supervised.
- Adoption Services were provided to 30 children and their biological and adoptive families.
- 6 adoptions were finalized.
- DSS Staff and affiliates stayed with 21 different children for a total of 179 days.

## **FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES**

- \$992,230 was collected in Child Support payments for 960 children.
- Paternity was established for 30 children.
- 25 new court orders for support were established.
- An average of 148 children received monthly Childcare Subsidy payments enabling their caretakers to work outside the home.
- \$27,092 was recouped by our Program Integrity program from individuals who had received incorrect benefits.
- An average of 42 individuals received Work First Family Assistance services per month, including a monthly benefit check to participants who met program requirements.
- An average of 5,929 individuals received Food and Nutrition benefits each month.
- \$5,512,528 in Food and Nutrition benefits were issued.
- An average of 152 individuals per month received Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation services totaling \$266,949.
- 62 individuals received assistance from the Substance Abuse/Mental Health Liaison.
- 6859 people came to the agency for services.
- 27 individuals completed Voter Registration forms.
- Gift baskets were provided to 7 newly diagnosed breast cancer patients by our staff led Breast Cancer Support Group. Each person also received a check for \$100.

- Agency Blessing Booth (a small food bank) helped individuals with \$3,500 in food products.

## Soil and Water Conservation District

Janice Pack, Director



### DEPARTMENT OVERVIEW

The Stokes Soil & Water Conservation District administers state and federal cost share programs that provide cost assistance to landowners for the installation of best management practices (bmp's) that improve water quality and reduce erosion. We also oversee maintenance of 24 watershed structures and offer free technical assistance to landowners providing them with the knowledge and tools needed to conserve, maintain, and restore the natural resources on their property. Throughout the year we also provide conservation educational programs to schools, community organizations, and land producers to promote conservation awareness. Our staff consists of 2 full-time permanent employees. In the 2023 calendar year, our department exceeded goals by completing several large contracts and paying out over \$363,000 to contractors and landowners for successfully completing contracts that will provide water quality benefits for all of Stokes County.

### COST SHARE PROGRAMS & GRANTS

In addition to receiving our annual cost share allocation to implement bmp's from the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation and USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Service in 2023, we also applied for and received several grants.

- State Cost Share Programs
  - Wrote 5 contracts obligating \$63,739 for the installation of bmp's (landowners have 3 years to install practices)
  - Paid out \$77,484 to landowners who successfully completed their contracts.
- Federal Cost Share Programs
  - Paid out \$76,652 to landowners who successfully completed contracts to install bmp's
- Grants
  - NC Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP) – *flood prevention grant*
    - Paid \$100,500 to local contractor for stream debris removal on 7 stream segments; total amount of debris removed – 3,767 cubic yards
  - Little Snow Creek Stream Renovation Project – *water quality grant obtained to repair in-stream practices of former restoration project destroyed by flooding in 2019/20*

- Paid contractor \$108,978 to repair in-stream practices
- TOTAL PAID OUT THROUGH DEPT. IN 2023 CALENDAR YEAR - \$363,614

### **CONSERVATION PLANNING & STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

- Completed 24 conservation plans identifying landowners' conservation objectives and assessing the natural resource issues on their property.
- Conducted 112 site visits at the request of landowners.
- Leased seed drill out to Stokes Co. citizens to reseed and establish 234.6 acres of hayland, pastureland, and wildlife plantings.
- Attended 10 training courses offered by the NC Association of Soil & Water Conservation and the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation in an effort to become more proficient in our duties and provide better service to citizens.

### **WATERSHED MAINTENANCE**

- Staff routinely inspects all 24 watershed structures multiple times throughout the year, especially after major rain events. Official annual inspection occurred on October 18, 2023, with Stokes Soil & Water staff & board members, NC Division of Soil & Water staff, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service staff, and Stokes Co. Manager, all participating. Toe-drain pipes were cleaned out, risers were checked for debris, and the front, top and backside of dams were checked closely for any eroded areas, leaks or scouring holes. The following watershed maintenance was completed in 2023:
  - Reseeded front side of dam and emergency spillway at LY-6 watershed – 3/15/23
  - Cut trees from dam abutment area on TFC-13 watershed – 4/13/23
  - Spread lime on all 24 watershed dams and emergency spillways – 4/25/23
  - Mowed all 24 watersheds – 5/2023 & 9/2023

### **EDUCATION & OUTREACH**

- Reached 1,404 students/citizens through conservation educational programs.
- Office newsletter distributed to 2,300 citizens in March 2023 and September 2023
- Displayed fair-booth at Stokes County fair in September 2023 highlighting conservation programs

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## **Tax Department**

### **Richard Brim, Tax Administrator**

The Stokes County Tax Office is pleased to report a successful year for 2023. The Tax Office was able to operate at a high level of efficiency and fulfill taxpayers' needs in a timely manner, while promoting a taxpayer friendly environment with an emphasis on customer service and public relations.

The total annual 2023 property assessed tax valuation was approximately 4.98 billion dollars. The total valuation is composed of four different categories: Real Property, Personal Property (Business and Individual), Motor Vehicles and Public Utilities. The following chart illustrates the allocation breakdown by property type for the County:

<b>County (General County, School Operating Expense and Education Debt/Building Fund)</b>		
<b>Property Type</b>	<b>Valuation</b>	<b>% of Valuation</b>
<b>Real Property</b>	<b>\$3,325,813,562</b>	<b>66.73%</b>
<b>Personal Property</b>	<b>\$241,077,218</b>	<b>4.84%</b>
<b>Motor Vehicles</b>	<b>\$521,360,073</b>	<b>10.46%</b>
<b>Public Utilities</b>	<b>\$895,396,690</b>	<b>17.97%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,983,647,543</b>	<b>100%</b>

The chart below provides **total deferments and exemptions for 2023**:

<b>Deferment/Exemption Type</b>	<b>Valuation</b>
<b>Land Deferred (Present Use Value Program)</b>	<b>\$397,848,300</b>
<b>Tax Relief (Elderly/Disabled and Disabled Veteran)</b>	<b>\$53,502,449</b>
<b>Exempt (Government, Religious, Etc.)</b>	<b>\$271,952,754</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$723,303,503</b>

The chart below indicates the **total number for each category** for Stokes County.

<b>Tax District</b>	<b>Real Property Parcels</b>	<b>Personal Property (Business and Individual)</b>	<b>Motor Vehicles</b>	<b>Public Utilities</b>
<b>County, School Operating Expense, Education Debt/Building Fund</b>	<b>30,971</b>	<b>9,817</b>	<b>55,031</b>	<b>35</b>

## RECAP OF 2023

<b>Appraisal/Revaluation (Real Property)</b>				
New construction continues to remain strong. Based on preliminary estimations Stokes County has added approximately \$65,000,000 in new construction property valuation during 2023. Appraisers should complete new construction data entry by Mid-February.				
Appraisers have been conducting field reviews on all improved qualified sales in preparation for the 2025 Reappraisal.				

<b>Discovery and Garnishment</b>				
Type	Audit Date	Number of Accounts	Total Value	Amount Due
Personal Property Discoveries	2023	245	\$2,726,605	\$32,295.52
Type	Date	Number of Accounts	Original Levy Amount	Collected Amount
Garnishments	2023	777	\$411,494.35	\$206,889.62

<b>EMS Billing and Collections January - December 2023</b>			
Transports Billed	Total Charges	Total Paid (Current and Prior)	Non-Billable
5256	\$3,736,056.70	\$2,618,845.02	\$751,927.69

<b>GIS/Mapping/Land Records</b>
Processed 1842 Deed Transfers
Created 256 new parcels
Creation of Dan River Mile Marker Layer
Created an Accommodation Layer



## **CONCERNS**

The Tax Office is very fortunate to have such a great group of trained employees. One of the reasons is due to experience. I reported to the Board early last year that the median number of years worked in the Tax Office was 24. Since that report, we had a Real Property Appraiser retire with 30 years of experience. On April 30<sup>th</sup> of this year our Business Personal Property Appraiser is scheduled to retire with 23 years of service. Also, we have nine (9) employees that are currently eligible for retirement or will be within three (3) years. Experience is not something that can be replaced overnight. Currently, we are long range planning for the office. While we place an emphasis on cross-training within each unit of the Tax Office (Administration, Appraisal/Revaluation, Assessment/Listing, Collections (Tax and EMS), GIS/Mapping/Land Records), it is difficult to cross-train between units for multiple reasons. We will continue to evaluate employee performance; and, hopefully, a system can be implemented to reward employees who go the extra mile.

The Tax Office is looking forward to another great year in 2024. We will continue to place an emphasis on customer service and serving taxpayers to the best of our ability.

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## **Vehicle Maintenance**

### **Danny Triplett, Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor**

Vehicle maintenance continues to stay busy with the current fleet. Ambulances are a challenge to keep them going due to the issue of not being able to receive new ones that have been ordered. In August, we hired a new mechanic, James Cook. He is doing a great job so far and we look forward to what he will accomplish in the upcoming year.

The brake lathe has been installed and is functioning properly.

Completed **706** work orders in 2023.

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## **Veterans Services**

### **Larry Hunsucker, Veteran Service Officer**

#### ***“Serving Those Who Served”***

2023 was a watershed year with the number of Veteran contacts sharply increasing. This increase was largely due to the passage of the PACT ACT by Congress and signed into law by the President on Aug. 10, 2022. This law expanded presumptive benefits for

veterans who were on active duty from the Vietnam War Era to the most current veterans that are presently leaving active duty. The VA has reported a 75% increase in both disability claims and health benefit claims nationwide, and this number would likely be true for Stokes County as well. A review of the number of claims that were filed is documented in my PC under documents and submissions to the VA. I also keep a daily log on a blue line pad to record all phone calls. Most of the contacts were face-to-face appointments with the veteran or a surviving spouse.

Another aspect of the PACT ACT was the re-opening of previously denied claims which has resulted in a significant increase in appeals for veteran disability benefits as well as benefits for surviving spouses. Appeals are time consuming and require working with claimant to get needed medical records and in some cases statements from physician. In addition, review of governing regulations contained in USC 38 and CFR 38 is necessary in order to ensure that these appeals meet legal standards.

The aging Vietnam Era veterans are filing more claims linked to agent orange and other toxic exposures that result in the onset of cancers, heart disease and other conditions.

2023 was also notable for the number of veterans who have moved into Stokes County, many from out of state. While many had already been awarded 100% permanent and total compensation, they came into my office to get the forms filled out for the property tax exclusion form (NCDVA-9), the MVR-33A form to get DV (disabled veteran) NC license plates or other special plates, as well as form for lifetime hunting and fishing license. Many also wanted to change their VA representation to NCDMVA so that I would be able to access their VA claims file in the event that they might need to file additional claims. 100% permanent and total is not the final top rating, many may develop additional disabilities that would allow them to file for Special Monthly Compensation (SMC) additives above the 100% level.

To maintain my accreditation, I also had to find time to do online courses, annual training conference or regional training to get the required 16 hours of CEU's.

2023 was a year of incredible growth, resulting in claims that were successful which brought large sums of money into the County. It is likely this volume will continue into 2024 and many years thereafter.



**Board of County Commissioners**

**March 11, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

**Item number: VI.b.**

**Stokes County Community Video Tour Presentation**

Contact: Tory Mabe, Economic Development & Tourism Tech Analyst

**Summary:**

Now in our tenth year, Stokes County Economic Development & Tourism is happy to partner with CGI Digital to produce and present a Video Tour of Stokes County to residents, visitors, businesses and those interested in finding out more about Stokes County. This video tour will be featured on the county website as well as the Stokes County Economic Development Website, and be available to utilize in social media postings and within our Smartphone App. The Video Tour will allow viewers to learn more about area attractions, quality of life, economic development and so much more.

CGI works in partnership with the National League of Cities and the United States Conference of Mayors to provide tools that showcase and promote counties and municipalities nationwide. This service is free to the county or town, via advertising opportunities that local businesses and organizations will have to be included in the video player of the County Video Tour.

Video Tours are refreshed every three years to keep video and information fresh and up to date with changes in the community. With this refresh, the videographer who was on location with me for three days helped to capture and showcase all Emergency Management aspects, equipment and details helping spread the word about our Emergency 911 Center, Fire Marshal's Office, EMS, and Sheriff's Department.

The new videos will be played at the meeting on March 11, 2024 with commentary by Tory Mabe. Videos will be uploaded to the agenda after published to the website in the next week or two.



**Board of County Commissioners**

**March 11, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

**Item number: VII.a.**

**Stokes County Health Department Fee Increase Request**

Contact: Health Director, Tammy Martin

**Summary:**

The Board of Health has approved the attached fee increases for the Stokes County Health Department. The fee increase also requires approval from the Board of Commissioners.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
SC Health Department Fee Increase Request	3/8/2024	Cover Memo

**Stokes County Health Department Fees Increase Request**

<b>CPT CODE</b>	<b>CPT TITLE</b>	<b>CURRENT CHARGE</b>	<b>NEW CHARGE</b>
S0280	Medical Home Program, Comprehensive Care	\$50.00	\$74.00
S0281	Medical Home Program, Maintenance Of Plan	\$150.00	\$221.00
59425	Predelivery Care 4-6 Visits	\$500.00	\$567.00
59426	Predelivery Care 7 Or More Visits	\$800.00	\$1,013.00



**Board of County Commissioners  
March 11, 2024  
6:00 PM**

**Item number: VII.b.**

**Demolition at 1075 Dodgetown Road**

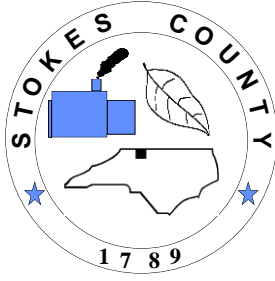
Contact: Glenda Pruitt, Purchasing/Project Manager

**Summary:**

Bids were received for the demolition project at 1075 Dodgetown Road and opened publicly on February 29, 2024 at 2:00 pm.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Demolition at 1075 Dodgetown Road	3/5/2024	Cover Memo
Map	3/5/2024	Backup Material



*Stokes County*  
*Purchasing Department*

Memorandum

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Glenda Pruitt, Purchasing/Project Manager

Date: March 4, 2024

Re: Demolition at 1075 Dodgetown Road

Bids were received for the demolition project at 1075 Dodgetown Road and opened publicly on February 29, 2024 at 2:00 pm. Below are the ten (10) bids received:

<b>Bidder</b>	<b>Amount</b>
EMR Services Inc	\$104,857.50
East Landscaping & Seeding, Inc DBA East Grading	\$137,588.00
DH Griffin Wrecking Company, Inc	\$149,742.00
KTF Contractor Services, LLC	\$158,850.00
MBH Enterprises, Inc	\$162,346.00
Carolina Hauling & Junk Removal	\$192,115.00
Four Seasons	\$237,000.00
Stewarts Grading & Hauling	\$245,059.76
Silas Ridge Construction Services	\$296,757.00
James Mabe, Faith Farms Grading & Hauling	\$425,000.00

EMR Services, Inc from Thomasville, NC was the lowest bid received. I am requesting the Board to approve EMR Services, Inc as the demolition contractor for this project with the bid of \$104,857.50.





Disclaimer  
This map was prepared using the most reliable sources from government and private industry sources. There are no guaranties (implied or expressed) regarding this map by the Stokes County Mapping/GIS Department. Furthermore, the Stokes County Mapping/GIS Department shall not be held responsible to any party, under any circumstance for damages arising from the use or misuse of this map. Any and all errors brought to our attention will be corrected in later revisions.

8x11 P

Stokes County GIS Mapping

Tax Map

**2.0 Acres Estimated in White Outline for Re-seeding**

1:1,200

0 25 50 100 150 200 Feet

Printed  
Date: 2/15/2024







**Board of County Commissioners**

**March 11, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

**Item number: VII.c.**

**Verizon Booth Mountain Tower Lease**

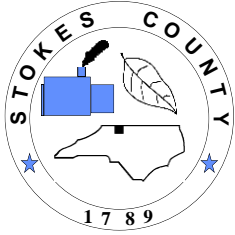
Contact: Glenda Pruitt, Purchasing/Project Manager

**Summary:**

Verizon Wireless contacted the County in regard to the tower lease on Booth Mountain. More information will be provided at the meeting and is attached for viewing.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Tower Lease Booth Mountain	3/8/2024	Cover Memo
Tower Lease Agreement 2004	3/8/2024	Backup Material
Term Sheet Requested	3/8/2024	Backup Material



*Stokes County*  
*Purchasing Department*

Memorandum

To: Board of Commissioners

From: Glenda Pruitt, Purchasing/Project Manager

Date: March 8, 2024

Re: Verizon Tower, Booth Mountain

Shiree Alexander, lease consultant with Verizon, contacted me in regard to the tower on Booth Mountain. She stated that Verizon Wireless continues to re-evaluate its network and assess the value of each of its communications facilities. When I received the call I was not familiar with this contract, so I started researching with the help of Planning Director, Eric Nance and some older files were found. I reached out to County Attorney Browder for assistance and all files were given for his review. It has been determined that the original contract was signed in 2004, an abatement was signed in 2007 and extended through 2023, and an amendment in 2019. Verizon has requested the below for approval.

As we discussed, Verizon Wireless would like to include this site in its long-term portfolio under the following terms:

- New Rent Amount: \$1,020.11 per month commencing on (August 1, 2024)
- New Rent Escalator: Fifteen Percent (15%) every 5 years (next increase on August 1, 2029)
- Additional Renewal Terms: Six (6) additional five (5) year renewal terms

County Attorney Browder asked the below question:

The lease is currently in its 20th year, and the scheduled monthly rental for the 20th year is \$1267.40. In August the fourth 5 year extension will start, and the scheduled monthly payment during the fourth extension is \$1457.51. Why is the proposed new rent amount only \$1,020.11?

Below is Shiree's response:

Reduction is due to technology changes. Sites like yours were designed for coverage, now things have changed and it's all about capacity- 5G, data, streaming, content, etc. Those sites were not designed for the high amount of data being transmitted, and

Verizon's operating costs are escalating. Should the proposal be declined, the site is then 'possibly' flagged for a review of alternative locations. No guarantee that Verizon will decommission the site, but it is a possibility. Feel free to call me. I'd be more than happy to discuss.

This response was submitted to County Attorney Browder and he advised that the Board would need to discuss.

DOC#-TLA9-26-97

**TOWER LEASE AGREEMENT**

This Tower Lease Agreement (the "Agreement") , is made this 16 day of July, 2004, between **STOKES COUNTY**, a body politic and political subdivision of the State of North Carolina, with its principal offices located at 1014 Main Street, Danbury, North Carolina 27016, Tax ID #56-6000340, hereinafter designated LESSOR and **CELLCO PARTNERSHIP**, d/b/a Verizon Wireless, with its principal offices at 180 Washington Valley Road, Bedminster, New Jersey 07921, hereinafter designated LESSEE. The LESSOR and LESSEE are at times collectively referred to hereinafter as the "Parties" or individually as the "Party".

**WITNESSETH**

**WHEREAS**, LESSOR is the owner of certain real property located at 1429 Mounce Road, in the Town of Danbury, Stokes County, North Carolina;

**WHEREAS**, LESSOR currently owns and operates an existing communications tower on said property (the "Existing Communications Tower");

**WHEREAS**, LESSEE desires to lease a portion of the subject Property, as defined herein, to construct, maintain and operate a communications facility;

**WHEREAS**, the Existing Communications Tower is of insufficient capacity to accommodate the equipment of LESSEE, and LESSEE, therefore, intends to construct a replacement communications tower of a height of One Hundred Ninety Nine (199') feet (the "Replacement Communications Tower"), which upon completion, will be owned and maintained by LESSOR, and a portion of which shall be leased to LESSEE;

**WHEREAS**, LESSOR deems it in the best interest of LESSOR to lease a portion of said Property to LESSEE, along with a portion of the Replacement Communications Tower; and

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants contained herein and intending to be legally bound hereby, the Parties hereto agree as follows:

07/09/04

1. REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING COMMUNICATIONS TOWER WITH REPLACEMENT TOWER.

- a. Construction of Replacement Communications Tower. The subject property is only suitable for colocation only if Existing Communications Tower is removed and all equipment on the Existing Communications Tower is transferred to the Replacement Communication Tower. The Replacement Communications Tower shall be of sufficient structural capacity to accommodate LESSOR, LESSEE, all third parties with existing equipment on the Existing Communications Tower, as well as limited additional capacity for future uses, such additional limited capacity to be as determined by LESSEE. During construction of the Replacement Communications Tower and until LESSOR conveys title to the Existing Communications Tower to LESSEE, LESSEE shall not remove the Existing Communications Tower from the Property, nor shall lessee's construction of the Replacement Communications Tower unreasonably interfere with or interrupt the operation of the Existing Communications Tower. LESSEE shall replace LESSOR's existing cables, conduit, antennas and microwave dishes ("Existing Equipment") with new cables, conduit, antennas and microwave dishes ("Replacement Equipment") and install the Replacement Equipment on the Replacement Communications Tower at the appropriate elevations as determined by LESSOR. Third party colocating lessees or licensees (the "Existing Sublessees") shall coordinate with LESSOR and LESSEE for appropriate times for the installation, at the Existing Sublessee's sole cost and expense, of their equipment on the Replacement Tower. LESSEE shall make commercially reasonable efforts to avoid interrupting the service provided by Existing Sublessees. All work to be performed with respect to the Replacement Equipment shall be performed by third parties approved by LESSOR, such approval not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed, under LESSOR's supervision, in a workmanlike manner consistent with LESSOR's construction standards. If necessary, LESSOR, at no cost to LESSEE, will use commercially reasonable efforts to obtain the cooperation of any third party property owner to the extent necessary.
- b. Government Approvals. Prior to commencing construction of the Replacement Communications Tower, LESSEE shall obtain and submit to LESSOR copies of all certificates, permits, licenses, and other approvals that may be required by any federal, state, or local authorities, including, without limitation, the FCC and FAA, relating to LESSEE's construction of the Replacement Communications Tower (collectively the "Approvals"). LESSOR, at no cost to LESSOR, shall cooperate with LESSEE's reasonable business efforts to obtain Approvals.



- c. Approval of LESSOR and Existing Sublessees. Prior to commencing the construction of the Replacement Communications Tower, LESSEE will obtain the approval of LESSOR and each of the Existing Sublessees for the construction drawing which shall detail the planned location and specifications of (i) the Replacement Communications Tower, (ii) all existing ground based equipment, and (iii) all Replacement Equipment which is to be installed upon the Replacement Communications Tower. As to the LESSOR, such approval shall not be unreasonably withheld, conditioned, or delayed. In the event LESSEE is not able to obtain such approvals, LESSEE may terminate this Agreement.
- d. Conveyance of Replacement Communications Tower. As used in this section, "Final Completion" shall occur when the local jurisdiction in which the Replacement Communications Tower is located has inspected the Replacement Communications Tower and has issued a final unconditioned certificate of occupancy or equivalent certification with respect to the Replacement Communications Tower. Upon Final Completion, LESSEE shall provide LESSOR with all certificates, permits, licenses or other approvals required by any federal, state or local authority to construct the Replacement Communications Tower, and all other documents reasonably requested by LESSOR evidencing that the Replacement Communications Tower is free of all liens and encumbrances and that the Replacement Communications Tower complies with all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations. Upon LESSOR's written acknowledgment of receipt of such documentation, LESSEE shall convey title to the Replacement Communications Tower to LESSOR by bill of sale "AS IS" and without any warranty or representation regarding the suitability of the Replacement Communications Tower for any particular purpose of use, and LESSEE shall assign to LESSOR all warranties provided by the tower manufacturer to the extent they are transferable by an assignment of warranties.
- e. Conveyance of the Existing Communications Tower. Upon LESSOR's approval of the installation of the Replacement Equipment on the Replacement Communications Tower, such approval not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed, LESSOR shall convey title to the Existing Communications Tower by bill of sale without warranties of any kind whatsoever to LESSEE, free and clear of all liens and encumbrances. Upon conveyance of the Existing Communications Tower to LESSEE, LESSEE shall, at its sole cost and expense, immediately dismantle and remove the Existing Communications Tower from the Property.
- f. Payment of Costs. LESSEE shall pay all costs associated with the construction of the Replacement Communications Tower, including without



limitation: the cost of the Replacement Communications Tower; freight to the Property; foundation installation costs; tower erection costs; costs associated with the construction of a fence or other provisions for security; the reasonable cost of drawing telephone and electric services to the Replacement Communications Tower; tower grounding costs; the cost of building and other permits; the costs of erosion control and drainage; landscaping costs; the cost of environmental and geotechnical studies; the costs of all design and engineering plans and specifications and surveys; title examination and title commitment costs; zoning costs including without limitation, filing and application fees; recording costs; and costs incurred regarding FAA and FCC compliance, and any and all other required Federal regulatory filings. LESSEE shall also pay all costs associated with installation of the Replacement Equipment on the Replacement Communications Tower including, without limitation, all costs to (i) disconnect the Existing Equipment from electric and telco utilities; (ii) remove the Existing Equipment from the Existing Communications Tower; (iii) install the Replacement Equipment on the Replacement Communications Tower; and (iv) connect the Replacement Equipment to electric and telco utilities.

2. PREMISES. LESSOR hereby leases to the LESSEE that certain space on the Replacement Communications Tower from One Hundred Eighty Five (185') feet to the top of the tower structure (the "Reserved Tower Space"), said Replacement Communications Tower to be located on that real property located in the City of Danbury, Stokes County, State of North Carolina, as shown on the Tax Map of the County of Stokes as parcel number 6956-00-14-6430 and being further described in Deed Book 508 at Page 1496, and Deed Book 508, at Page 1498 as recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds for Stokes County (the entirety of LESSOR's property is referred to hereinafter as the "Property"), together with a Seven Hundred Fifty (750) square feet parcel of land for the installation of LESSEE's equipment building, together with the non-exclusive right for ingress and egress, seven (7) days a week, twenty-four (24) hours a day, on foot or motor vehicle, including trucks, and for the installation and maintenance of utility wires, poles, cables, conduits, and pipes over, under, or along a twenty (20') foot wide right-of-way extending from the nearest public right-of-way, Mounce Road to the demised premises. The tower space, demised premises and right-of-way are collectively referred to hereinafter as the "Premises". The Premises are as described in Exhibit "A" attached hereto and incorporated herein, and as shown on Exhibit B attached hereto and incorporated herein. In the event any public utility is unable to use the aforementioned right-of-way, the LESSOR hereby agrees to use commercially reasonable efforts to grant an additional right-of-way either to the LESSEE or to the public utility at no cost to the LESSEE. Without limitation as to LESSEE'S use of the Reserved Tower Space, LESSOR hereby grants permission to LESSEE to install, maintain and operate the radio communications equipment, antennas and appurtenances described in Exhibit "C" attached hereto in

accordance with all local zoning regulations. LESSEE reserves the right to replace the aforementioned equipment with similar and comparable equipment within the Reserved Tower Space.

3. SURVEY. LESSOR has granted to LESSEE the right to survey the Property and Premises, and said survey is attached hereto as Exhibit "B", and shall control in the event of boundary and access discrepancies between it and Exhibit "A". Cost for such work shall be borne by the LESSEE.

4. TERM. This Agreement shall be effective as of the date of execution by both parties, provided, however, the initial term shall be for five (5) years and shall commence on the Commencement Date (as hereinafter defined) at which time rental payments will be due at an annual rental of Ten Thousand and no/100ths (\$10,000.00) Dollars to be paid in equal monthly installments on the first day of the month, in advance, to LESSOR or to such other person, firm or place as the LESSOR may, from time to time, designate in writing at least thirty (30) days in advance of any rental payment date. The Commencement Date is defined as the first (1st) day of the month following the date this Agreement is executed by the parties or the first (1st) day of the month following the date LESSEE is granted a building permit by the governmental agency charged with issuing such permits, whichever event occurs last. In consideration of LESSEE constructing the Replacement Communications Tower and providing a bill of sale to LESSOR to the Replacement Communications Tower, LESSEE shall receive a rent abatement (the "Rent Abatement Amount" to be applied against the Rent for a term sufficient for LESSEE to recover its actual costs for and expense of constructing the Replacement Communications Tower, including all those costs as required to be paid by LESSEE set forth in Section 1(f) herein. The Rent Abatement Amount shall be determined by the Parties within thirty (30) days of Final Completion of the Replacement Communications Tower.

If permitted by the local utility company servicing the Property, LESSEE shall furnish and install an electrical submeter at the Property for the measurement of electrical power used by LESSEE's installation. LESSEE shall pay for its own power consumption used thirty (30) days after receipt of an invoice from LESSOR indicating the usage amount.

5. EXTENSIONS. This Agreement shall automatically be extended for four (4) additional five (5) year terms unless the LESSEE terminates it at the end of the then current term by giving the LESSOR written notice of the intent to terminate at least six (6) months prior to the end of the then current term.

6. EXTENSION RENTALS. The annual rental for the first (1st) five (5) year extension term shall be increased to Eleven Thousand Five Hundred and no/100ths (\$11,500.00) Dollars; the annual rental for the second (2nd) five (5) year extension term shall be increased to Thirteen Thousand Two Hundred Twenty Five and no/100ths (\$13,225.00) Dollars; the annual rental for the third (3rd) five (5) year extension term shall



be increased to Fifteen Thousand Two Hundred Eight and 75/100ths (\$15,208.75) Dollars; and the annual rental for the fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) five (5) year extension shall be increased to Seventeen Thousand Four Hundred Ninety and no/100ths (\$17,490.00) Dollars.

7. ADDITIONAL EXTENSIONS. If at the end of the fourth (4th) five (5) year extension term this Agreement has not been terminated by either Party by giving to the other written notice of an intention to terminate it at least six (6) months prior to the end of such term, this Agreement shall continue in force upon the same covenants, terms and conditions for a further term of five (5) years and for five (5) year terms thereafter until terminated by either Party by giving to the other written notice of its intention to so terminate at least six (6) months prior to the end of such term. Annual rental for each such additional five (5) year term shall be equal to 115% of the annual rental payable with respect to the immediately preceding five (5) year term.

8. USE; GOVERNMENTAL APPROVALS. LESSEE shall use the Premises for the purpose of constructing, maintaining and operating a communications facility and uses incidental and all necessary appurtenances. A security fence consisting of chain link construction or similar but comparable construction may be placed around the perimeter of the Premises at the discretion of LESSEE (not including the access easement). All improvements shall be at LESSEE's expense and the installation of all improvements shall be at the discretion and option of the LESSEE. LESSEE shall have the right to replace, repair, add or otherwise modify its equipment or any portion thereof within the Reserved Tower Space and the ground portion of the Premises, whether the equipment is specified or not on any exhibit attached hereto, during the term of this Agreement. LESSEE will maintain the Premises in a good condition reasonable wear and tear excepted. LESSOR will maintain the Property, excluding the Premises, in good condition, reasonable wear and tear excepted. It is understood and agreed that LESSEE's ability to use the Property is contingent upon its obtaining after the execution date of this Agreement all of the certificates, permits and other approvals (collectively the "Governmental Approvals") that may be required by any Federal, State or Local authorities as well as satisfactory soil boring tests which will permit LESSEE use of the Premises as set forth above. LESSOR shall cooperate with LESSEE in its effort to obtain such approvals and shall take no action which would adversely affect the status of the Property with respect to the proposed use by LESSEE. In the event that any of such applications for such Governmental Approvals should be finally rejected or LESSEE determines that such Governmental Approvals may not be obtained in a timely manner or any Governmental Approval issued to LESSEE is canceled, expires, lapses, or is otherwise withdrawn or terminated by governmental authority or soil boring tests are found to be unsatisfactory so that LESSEE in its sole discretion will be unable to use the Premises for its intended purposes or the LESSEE determines that the Property is no longer technically compatible for its intended use, LESSEE shall have the right to terminate this Agreement. Notice of the LESSEE's exercise of its right to terminate shall be given to LESSOR in writing by certified mail, return receipt requested, and shall be effective upon the mailing of such notice by the LESSEE.

All rentals paid to said termination date shall be retained by the LESSOR. Upon such termination, this Agreement shall become null and void and all the Parties shall have no further obligations including the payment of money, to each other.

9. ACCESS TO TOWER. LESSOR agrees the LESSEE shall have a non-exclusive right of free access to the Tower at all times for the purpose of installing and maintaining the said equipment. LESSOR shall furnish LESSEE with necessary means of access for the purpose of ingress and egress to this site and Tower location. It is agreed, however, that only authorized engineers, employees or properly authorized contractors of LESSEE or persons under their direct supervision will be permitted to enter said premises.

10. TOWER COMPLIANCE. LESSOR covenants that it will keep the Replacement Communications Tower in good repair as required by all federal, state, county and local laws. The LESSOR shall also comply with all rules and regulations enforced by the Federal Communications Commission with regard to the lighting, marking and painting of towers. If the LESSOR fails to make such repairs including maintenance the LESSEE may make the repairs and the costs thereof shall be payable to the LESSEE by the LESSOR on demand. If the LESSOR does not make payment to the LESSEE within ten (10) days after such demand, the LESSEE shall have the right to deduct the costs of the repairs from the succeeding monthly rental amounts normally due from the LESSEE to the LESSOR.

No materials may be used in the installation of the antennas or transmission lines that will cause corrosion or rust or deterioration of the Replacement Communications Tower structure or its appurtenances.

All antenna(s) on the Replacement Communications Tower must be identified by a marking fastened securely to its bracket on the Tower and all transmission lines are to be tagged at the conduit opening where it enters any user's equipment space.

11. INTERFERENCE. LESSEE agrees to have installed radio equipment of the type and frequency which will not cause measurable interference to the equipment existing as of the date this Agreement is executed by the Parties of the LESSOR or other lessees of the Property. In the event LESSEE's equipment causes such interference, and after LESSOR has notified LESSEE of such interference, LESSEE will take all steps necessary to correct and eliminate the interference. LESSOR agrees that LESSOR and any other tenants of the property who currently have or in the future take possession of the Property will be permitted to install only such radio equipment that is of the type and frequency which will not cause measurable interference to the existing equipment of the LESSEE. The Parties acknowledge that there will not be an adequate remedy at law for non-compliance with the provisions of this paragraph and therefore, either Party shall have the right to specifically enforce the provisions of this paragraph in a court of competent jurisdiction.



12. LESSEE COMPLIANCE. All installations and operation in connection with this Agreement by LESSEE shall meet with all applicable Rules and Regulations of the Federal Communications Commission, Federal Aviation Agency and all applicable codes and regulations of the township, county and state concerned. Under this Agreement, the LESSOR assumes no responsibility for the licensing, operation, and/or maintenance of LESSEE's radio equipment.

13. INDEMNIFICATION. Each Party shall indemnify and hold the other harmless against any claim of liability or loss from personal injury or property damage resulting from or arising out of the use and occupancy of the Premises or the Property by the Party, its servants or agents, excepting, however, such claims or damages as may be due to or caused by the acts or omissions of the other Party, or its servants or agents.

14. INSURANCE. The Parties hereby waive any and all rights of action for negligence against the other which may hereafter arise on account of damage to the premises or to property, resulting from any fire, or other casualty of the kind covered by standard fire insurance policies with extended coverage, regardless of whether or not, or in what amounts, such insurance is now or hereafter carried by the Parties, or either of them. LESSOR and LESSEE each agree that at its own cost and expense, each will maintain comprehensive general liability and property liability insurance with liability limits of not less than \$1,000,000 for injury to or death of one or more persons in any one occurrence and \$500,000 for damage or destruction to property in any one occurrence. LESSOR agrees that LESSEE may self-insure against any loss or damage which could be covered by a comprehensive general public liability insurance policy.

15. ANNUAL TERMINATION. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained herein, provided LESSEE is not in default hereunder and shall have paid all rents and sums due and payable to the LESSOR by LESSEE, LESSEE shall have the right to terminate this Agreement upon the annual anniversary of this Agreement provided that three (3) months prior notice is given the LESSOR.

16. REMOVAL UPON TERMINATION. LESSEE, upon termination of the Agreement, shall, within ninety (90) days, remove its building(s), antenna structure(s) (except footings), fixtures and all personal property and otherwise restore the Property to its original condition, reasonable wear and tear excepted. LESSOR agrees and acknowledges that all of the equipment, fixtures and personal property of the LESSEE shall remain the personal property of the LESSEE and the LESSEE shall have the right to remove the same, whether or not said items are considered fixtures and attachments to real property under applicable law. If such time for removal causes LESSEE to remain on the Premises after termination of this Agreement, LESSEE shall pay rent at the then existing monthly rate or on the existing monthly pro-rata basis if based upon a longer

payment term, until such time as the removal of the building, antenna structure, fixtures and all personal property are completed.

17. RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL. If the LESSOR during the lease term or any extension of the lease term elects to sell all or any portion of the Property, whether separately or as part of the larger parcel of which the Property are a part, the LESSEE shall have the right of first refusal to meet any bona fide offer of sale on the same terms and conditions of such offer. If LESSEE fails to meet such bona fide offer within thirty (30) days after notice thereof from LESSOR, LESSOR may sell the Property or portion thereof to such third person in accordance with the terms and conditions of his offer. For purposes of this Paragraph, any transfer, bequest or devise of the LESSOR's interest in the Property as a result of the death of the LESSOR, whether by will or intestate succession, shall not be considered a sale of the Property for which the LESSEE has any right of first refusal.

18. RIGHTS UPON SALE. Should the LESSOR, at any time during the term of this Agreement, decide to sell all or any part of the Property to a purchaser other than LESSEE, such sale shall be under and subject to this Agreement and LESSEE's rights hereunder, and any sale by the LESSOR of the portion of this Property underlying the right-of-way herein granted shall be under and subject to the right of the LESSEE in and to such right-of-way.

19. QUIET ENJOYMENT. LESSOR covenants that LESSEE, on paying the rent and performing the covenants shall peaceably and quietly have, hold and enjoy the Premises.

20. TITLE. LESSOR covenants that LESSOR is seized of good and sufficient title and interest to the Property and has full authority to enter into and execute this Agreement. LESSOR further covenants that there are no other liens, judgments or impediments of title on the Property, or affecting LESSOR's title to the same, and that there are no covenants, easements or restrictions which prevent the use of the Premises by the LESSEE as set forth above.

21. INTEGRATION. It is agreed and understood that this Agreement contains all agreements, promises and understandings between the LESSOR and LESSEE and that no verbal or oral agreements, promises or understandings shall be binding upon either the LESSOR or LESSEE in any dispute, controversy or proceeding at law, and any addition, variation or modification to this Agreement shall be void and ineffective unless made in writing signed by the Parties. In the event any provision of the Agreement is found to be invalid or unenforceable, such finding shall not affect the validity and enforceability of the remaining provisions of this Agreement. The failure of either Party to insist upon strict performance of any of the terms or conditions of this Agreement or to exercise any of its rights under the Agreement shall not waive such rights and such Party shall have the right



to enforce such rights at any time and take such action as may be lawful and authorized under this Agreement, either in law or in equity.

22. GOVERNING LAW. This Agreement and the performance thereof shall be governed, interpreted, construed and regulated by the laws of the State in which the Property is located.

23. ASSIGNMENT. This Agreement may be sold, assigned or transferred by the LESSEE without any approval or consent of the LESSOR to the LESSEE's principal, affiliates, subsidiaries of its principal or to any entity which acquires all or substantially all of LESSEE's assets in the market defined by the Federal Communications Commission in which the Property is located by reason of a merger, acquisition or other business reorganization. As to other parties, this Agreement may not be sold, assigned or transferred without the written consent of the LESSOR, which such consent will not be unreasonably withheld or delayed.

24. NOTICES. All notices hereunder must be in writing and shall be deemed validly given if sent by certified mail, return receipt requested or by commercial courier, provided the courier's regular business is delivery service and provided further that it guarantees delivery to the addressee by the end of the next business day following the courier's receipt from the sender, addressed as follows (or any other address that the Party to be notified may have designated to the sender by like notice):

LESSOR: Stokes County  
1014 Main Street  
Danbury, North Carolina 27016

LESSEE: Cellco Partnership  
d/b/a Verizon Wireless  
180 Washington Valley Road  
Bedminster, New Jersey 07921  
Attention: Network Real Estate

Notice shall be effective upon mailing or delivering the same to a commercial courier, as permitted above.

25. DEFAULT. In the event there is a default by the LESSEE with respect to any of the provisions of this Agreement or its obligations under it, including the payment of rent, the LESSOR shall give LESSEE written notice of such default. After receipt of such written notice, the LESSEE shall have fifteen (15) days in which to cure any monetary



default and thirty (30) days in which to cure any non-monetary default, provided the LESSEE shall have such extended period as may be required beyond the thirty (30) days if the nature of the cure is such that it reasonably requires more than thirty (30) days and the LESSEE commences the cure within the thirty (30) day period and thereafter continuously and diligently pursues the cure to completion. The LESSOR may not maintain any action or effect any remedies for default against the LESSEE unless and until the LESSEE has failed to cure the same within the time periods provided in this paragraph.

26. SUCCESSORS. This Agreement shall extend to and bind the heirs, personal representatives, successors and assigns of the Parties hereto.

27. SUBORDINATION AND NON-DISTURBANCE. At LESSOR's option, this Agreement shall be subordinate to any mortgage or other security interest or other security interest by LESSOR which from time to time may encumber all or part of the Property or right-of-way; provided, however, every such mortgage or other security interest or other security interest shall recognize the validity of this Agreement in the event of a foreclosure of LESSOR's interest and also LESSEE's right to remain in occupancy of and have access to the Premises as long as LESSEE is not in default of this Agreement. LESSEE shall execute whatever instruments may reasonably be required to evidence this subordination clause. In the event the Property is encumbered by a mortgage or other security interest, the LESSOR immediately after this Agreement is executed, will obtain and furnish to LESSEE, a non-disturbance agreement for each such mortgage or other security interest in recordable form. In the event the LESSOR defaults in the payment and/or other performance of any mortgage or other security interest encumbering the Property, LESSEE, may, at its sole option and without obligation, cure or correct LESSOR's default and upon doing so, LESSEE shall be subrogated to any and all rights, titles, liens and equities of the holders of such mortgage or security interest and the LESSEE shall be entitled to deduct and setoff against all rents that may otherwise become due under this Agreement the sums paid by LESSEE to cure or correct such defaults.

28. RECORDING. LESSOR agrees to execute a Memorandum of this Agreement which LESSEE may record with the appropriate Recording Officer. The date set forth in the Memorandum of Lease is for recording purposes only and bears no reference to commencement of either term or rent payments.

29. ENVIRONMENTAL.

a. LESSOR will be responsible for all obligations of compliance with any and all environmental and industrial hygiene laws, including any regulations, guidelines, standards, or policies of any governmental authorities regulating or imposing standards of liability or standards of conduct with regard to any environmental or industrial hygiene conditions or concerns as may now or at any time hereafter be in effect, that are or were in any way

related to activity now conducted in, on, or in any way related to the Property, unless such conditions or concerns are caused by the activities of the LESSEE.

b. LESSOR shall hold LESSEE harmless and indemnify the LESSEE from and assume all duties, responsibility and liability at LESSOR's sole cost and expense, for all duties, responsibilities, and liability (for payment of penalties, sanctions, forfeitures, losses, costs, or damages) and for responding to any action, notice, claim, order, summons, citation, directive, litigation, investigation or proceeding which is in any way related to: a) failure to comply with any environmental or industrial hygiene law, including without limitation any regulations, guidelines, standards, or policies of any governmental authorities regulating or imposing standards of liability or standards of conduct with regard to any environmental or industrial hygiene concerns or conditions as may now or at any time hereafter be in effect, unless such compliance results from conditions caused by the LESSEE; and b) any environmental or industrial hygiene conditions arising out of or in any way related to the condition of the Property or activities conducted thereon, unless such environmental conditions are caused by the LESSEE.

30. CASUALTY. In the event of damage by fire or other casualty to the Premises that cannot reasonably be expected to be repaired within forth-five (45) days following same or, if the Property is damaged by fire or other casualty so that such damage may reasonably be expected to disrupt LESSEE's operations at the Premises for more than forty-five (45) days, then LESSEE may at any time following such fire or other casualty, provided LESSOR has not completed the restoration required to permit LESSEE to resume its operation at the Premises, terminate this Agreement upon fifteen (15) days written notice to LESSOR. Any such notice of termination shall cause this Agreement to expire with the same force and effect as though the date set forth in such notice were the date originally set as the expiration date of this Agreement and the parties shall make an appropriate adjustment, as of such termination date, with respect to payments due to the other under this Agreement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, all rent shall abate during the period of such fire or other casualty.

31. CONDEMNATION. In the event of any condemnation of the Property, LESSEE may terminate this Agreement upon fifteen (15) days written notice to LESSOR if such condemnation may reasonably be expected to disrupt LESSEE's operations at the Premises for more than forty-five (45) days. LESSEE may on its own behalf make a claim in any condemnation proceeding involving the Premises for losses related to the antennas, equipment, its relocation costs and its damages and losses (but not for the loss of its leasehold interest). Any such notice of termination shall cause this Agreement to expire with the same force and effect as though the date set forth in such notice were the date originally set as the expiration date of this Agreement and the parties shall make an appropriate adjustment as of such termination date with respect to payments due to the other under this Agreement.



32. SUBMISSION OF LEASE. The submission of this Agreement for examination does not constitute an offer to lease the Premises and this Agreement becomes effective only upon the full execution of this Agreement by the Parties. If any provision herein is invalid, it shall be considered deleted from this Agreement and shall not invalidate the remaining provisions of this Agreement. Each of the Parties hereto warrants to the other that the person or persons executing this Agreement on behalf of such party has the full right, power and authority to enter into and execute this Agreement on such Party's behalf and that no consent from any other person or entity is necessary as a condition precedent to the legal effect of this Agreement.


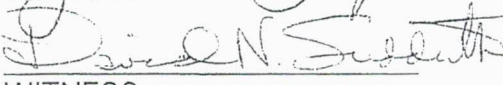
33. APPLICABLE LAWS. LESSEE shall use the Premises as may be required or as permitted by applicable laws, rules and regulations. LESSOR agrees to keep the Property in conformance with all applicable, laws, rules and regulations and agrees to reasonably cooperate with the LESSEE regarding any compliance required by the LESSEE in respect to its use of the Premises.

34. SURVIVAL. The provisions of the Agreement relating to indemnification from one Party to the other Party shall survive any termination or expiration of this Agreement. Additionally, any provisions of this Agreement which require performance subsequent to the termination or expiration of this Agreement shall also survive such termination or expiration.

35. CAPTIONS. The captions contained in this Agreement are inserted for convenience only and are not intended to be part of the Agreement. They shall not affect or be utilized in the construction or interpretation of the Agreement.

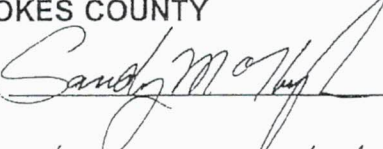
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties hereto have set their hands and affixed their respective seals the day and year first above written.

LESSOR:

  
WITNESS  
  
WITNESS

STOKES COUNTY

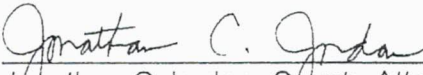
BY:

 [SEAL]

ITS:

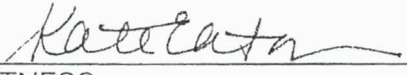
Chair - Board of Commissioners

Approved as to form and legal sufficiency:

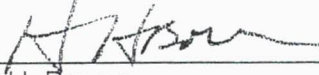
  
Jonathan C Jordan, County Attorney

LESSEE:

CELLCO PARTNERSHIP  
D/B/A VERIZON WIRELESS

  
WITNESS

BY:

  
Howard H. Bower  
Area Vice President – Network,  
South Area

F:\VERIZON\INC\DANBURY SITE\LEASE1.RED.doc



February 6, 2024

STOKES COUNTY

,  
ATTN: Glenda Pruitt

**Site Name: DANBURY**

**Site ID: 59331**

Dear Landlord,

I am following up with you regarding our recent telephone conversation setting forth Verizon Wireless's Lease Optimization Program. As discussed during our conversation, Verizon Wireless is interested in making certain modifications to the cell site lease regarding the Verizon Wireless communications facility on your property. These lease modifications will allow the cell site on your property to better meet Verizon Wireless's current operational needs and enhance its long term value to the overall network.

#### **Criteria for Cell Site Retention**

As we discussed, Verizon Wireless would like to include this site in its long-term portfolio under the following terms:

- **New Rent Amount:** \$1,020.11 per month commencing on (August 1, 2024)
- **New Rent Escalator:** Fifteen Percent (15%) every 5 years (next increase on August 1, 2029)
- **Additional Renewal Terms:** Six (6) additional five (5) year renewal terms

The foregoing proposal does not constitute a binding offer to amend the lease. No legal obligation is created by this letter or any other written or oral communications until a written amendment to the lease has been signed by both Landlord and Verizon Wireless. Verizon Wireless will continue to abide by the terms of the current lease until an amendment has been executed or the existing lease has been terminated or expires. Verizon Wireless values its affiliation with you and hopes that you choose to secure your site(s) to continue a long and mutually profitable relationship in the years to come. After having reviewed this proposal, please contact me prior to **February 12, 2024.**

Sincerely,



**Shiree Alexander**

Lease Consultant

Lease Optimization - CENREV

O 469.421.2954

180 Washington Valley Road, Bedminster, NJ 07921

**verizon**<sup>✓</sup>



**Board of County Commissioners**

**March 11, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

**Item number: VII.d.**

**Letter of Engagement for Womble Bond Dickinson**

Contact: Ty Browder, County Attorney

**Summary:**

Attached is a letter of engagement for enlisting the services of Womble Bond Dickinson with the review of lease arrangement for the hospital. The County is no longer utilizing the services of Turning Point Healthcare Advisors but will be using this firm instead. So, funding is already appropriated for this purpose at this time.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Letter of Engagement	3/8/2024	Cover Memo





**February 26, 2024**

Ty Browder  
County Attorney  
Stokes County  
Danbury, NC 27016

**Via E-mail: [tybrowder@browder-overby.com](mailto:tybrowder@browder-overby.com)**

Womble Bond Dickinson (US) LLP

300 North Greene Street  
Suite 1900  
Greensboro, NC 27401

t: 336.574.8030  
f: 336.574.4520

Thomas S. Stukes  
Partner  
Direct Dial: 336-574-8065  
Direct Fax: 336-574-4515  
E-mail: [Tom.Stukes@wbd-us.com](mailto:Tom.Stukes@wbd-us.com)

**Re: Letter of Engagement of Womble Bond Dickinson (US) LLP**

Dear Mr. Browder:

The purpose of this letter is to confirm the terms and conditions upon which Womble Bond Dickinson (US) LLP (the "firm") has agreed to assist Stokes County, North Carolina (the "County") with a review of a new lease arrangement for LifeBrite Community Hospital of Stokes located in Danbury, North Carolina (the "Matter").

If you should wish for us to represent it in subsequent matters, that work would be the subject of additional discussions and an update to this letter or an additional letter similar to this one covering the terms of our engagements in those subsequent matters.

We will bill monthly for our time and disbursements. Our hourly rates range from \$925.00 for our most experienced partners to \$255.00 for our most junior associates; my current rate is \$750.00 per hour. These billing rates are subject to adjustment from time to time by the firm without prior notice.

Attachment A to this letter reflects our policy in regard to our billing for costs and disbursements, which are in addition to our fees. Expenses we may make or incur on behalf of the County may include, as applicable, travel expenses, delivery charges, file reproduction costs, computer research charges, filing fees and the like. Our statement for fees and expenses will be rendered monthly and will be due upon receipt. Any statement which is not paid within thirty (30) days of its date will be considered past due. Past due billings will accrue interest at the rate of 1½% per month (18% per annum) until paid. Failure to completely pay a statement within thirty (30) days of its date shall constitute grounds for withdrawal as counsel, to which the County hereby consents in advance.

Our law firm is a multi-jurisdictional law firm representing many clients and handling a large number of complex matters each year. As a result, conflict of interest issues arise and, from time to time, may even include disputes between the firm and our own clients over the handling



of a matter. Under such circumstances, we need the ability to seek analysis of our obligations from our General Counsel's office without waiving the firm's own attorney-client privilege. We believe that seeking advice is in our clients' interest as well as our own. Accordingly, in signing this agreement, the County consents to our seeking advice from our General Counsel's office on legal ethics or related issues that may arise during our representation of the County and that our representation of the County shall not, thereby, waive any attorney-client privilege that we may have to protect the confidentiality of our communication with counsel.

Unless previously terminated, our representation of the County in this matter will terminate upon our sending our final statement for services rendered in the matter. We will return to the County, upon its request, any materials the County has furnished us in connection with the matter. Thereupon, we will store files respecting this matter for a minimum of six years following the conclusion of our representation in this matter, and we will provide the County with access to those files upon request. After six years from the conclusion of our representation in this matter, we will review the stored files with respect to whether they should be retained or destroyed. We disclaim any obligation to provide further notice to the County before destroying the files concerning this matter.

In an effort to deliver cost effective services, our firm uses legal support service providers located both inside and outside the U.S. to assist with help desk and technology issues, word processing, time entry, and other administrative tasks. In order for these service providers to complete these tasks, we must share certain client information. We have made reasonable efforts to ensure that these services are performed in a manner that is consistent with our firm's obligations under the relevant Rules of Professional Conduct with regards to maintaining client confidentiality and supervision of non-lawyer assistants, and the firm bears responsibility for the resulting work product. As part of the engagement with the firm, the County agrees and consents to the use of the services of these providers in the manner stated above.

Please note that our representation of the County does not give rise to an attorney-client relationship between us and any of the affiliates or constituents of the County, including officers or employees. The County therefore agrees that it will not give us confidential information regarding any of those parties during the course of our representation of the County. Accordingly, our representation in this matter of the County will not give rise to any conflict of interest in the event one of our other clients is adverse to any such other of those parties.

In order to enable us to render our services effectively, the County will fully and accurately disclose all facts and keep us advised of all developments relating to the matter. The County will otherwise fully cooperate with us and will be available to attend meetings, telephone conferences and any other proceedings necessary to our representation in this matter.

If the foregoing correctly reflects your understanding of the terms and conditions of our representation of the County, please indicate acceptance by executing the enclosed copy of this letter in the space provided below and return it to me, keeping a copy for your file. Please note that if you do not sign and return this letter, the giving of instructions by the County will constitute the County's full acceptance of the terms and conditions set forth herein and attached.



We are pleased to have this opportunity to be of service and to work with the County.

Best regards,

**Womble Bond Dickinson (US) LLP**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "T. Stukes", is positioned below the firm name.

Thomas S. Stukes  
Partner

AGREED TO AND ACCEPTED:

**Stokes County, North Carolina**

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Attachment A**

### **Re: Policy in Regard to Billing for Costs and Disbursements**

Our philosophy is to minimize out-of-pocket expenses consistent with those required in conjunction with the legal services we provide. We manage our expenses on behalf of clients as if they were our personal expenses.

We will bill Company for costs and disbursements made on the Company's behalf as indicated below:

**Telephone and facsimile charges.** We will not normally bill for local or domestic long distance telephone service, cellular service, text messaging services, or facsimile transmissions or copies. We may bill for international phone calls at our cost without markup.

**Outside computer research** including, but not limited to, LexisNexis®, Westlaw®, or PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records). Computerized research will be billed at our best estimate of actual cost, without markup and after application of any and all applicable volume discounts.

**Filing fees** will be billed at the charges incurred by the firm.

**Travel expenses.** We will bill travel expenses at our cost without markup.

**Express delivery services** (Federal Express, Airborne, etc.). We will bill for the charges at the regular rate listed by the express delivery company.

**Court reporters, expert witnesses, accountants.** We will bill at our cost without markup.



**Board of County Commissioners**

**March 11, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

**Item number: VII.e.**

**Resolution Declaring the Intent to Sell, Lease, or Convey Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital**

Contact:

Summary:

The Stokes County Board of Commissioners pursuant to NC General Statute 131E-13 will consider adopting a resolution at the March 11, 2024 Commissioners Meeting declaring the intent to sell, lease, or convey Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital. This resolution is attached for consideration.

At this meeting, when the resolution of intent is adopted, the statute requires the governing body to request proposals for lease or purchase by direct solicitation of potential lessees or buyers. Attached for consideration and approval also is the Request for Proposals (RFP) document.

General Statute 131E-13: Document ([ncleg.gov](https://www.ncleg.gov))

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Resolution of Intent	3/9/2024	Cover Memo
Exhibit A - Direct Solicitations	3/10/2024	Cover Memo
Request for Proposals (RFP)	3/9/2024	Cover Memo
SRMH Statement of Values - Attachment for RFP	3/9/2024	Cover Memo



**RESOLUTION DECLARING THE INTENT OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE COUNTY OF STOKES, NORTH CAROLINA TO LEASE, SELL, OR CONVEY  
STOKES-REYNOLDS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**

**WHEREAS**, Stokes-Reynolds Memorial Hospital (the “Hospital”) is owned by the County of Stokes, North Carolina (the “County”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Hospital consists of the Stokes-Reynolds Memorial Hospital inpatient hospital facility located at 1570 NC Hwy 8 & 89 North, Danbury, North Carolina, and the J.R. Jones Medical Center outpatient facility located at 402 West King Street, King, North Carolina; and

**WHEREAS**, the Hospital also includes a forty (40) bed skilled nursing facility located at 1570 NC Hwy 8 & 89 North, Danbury, North Carolina; and

**WHEREAS**, the Hospital also includes a rural health clinic in leased space at the Pine Hall Community Center, located at 3853 US 311 Hwy N, Pine Hall, NC 27042; and

**WHEREAS**, the Hospital is leased as a community general hospital from the County of Stokes and the Stokes-Reynolds Memorial Hospital, Inc.

**WHEREAS**, The Board of Commissioners of the County (the “Board of Commissioners”), is interested in receiving proposals for the lease, sale or conveyance of the Hospital and intends to negotiate a contract to sell, lease or convey the Hospital; and

**WHEREAS**, any lease, sale or conveyance of the Hospital by the Board of Commissioners (i) shall be pursuant to the authority granted to the County by Part 1, Article 2, Chapter 131E of the North Carolina General Statutes (the “Statute”), and (ii) shall be in compliance with the procedures set out in the Statute, and any document of sale or lease shall include the conditions required by the Statute;

**WHEREAS**, in compliance with the Statute, the Board of Commissioners has given notice by publication of its intent to lease, sell or convey the Hospital and has given notice by certified mail to certain agencies of the State of North Carolina, as required by the Statute; and

**WHEREAS**, there has been presented to the Board of Commissioners a Request For Proposals for the lease, sale or conveyance of the Hospital which the County intends to send to prospective lessees and buyers.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF STOKES, NORTH CAROLINA RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

(1) The Board of Commissioners hereby declares its intent to lease, sell, or convey Stokes-Reynolds Memorial Hospital, pursuant to terms and conditions negotiated by the Board of Commissioners.

(2) The Board of Commissioners hereby approves the form and content of the Request For Proposals (the “RFP”) and hereby authorizes the County Manager of Stokes County to provide a copy of the RFP to any person who requests a copy.

(3) The County Manager shall directly solicit proposals for the lease, sale, or conveyance of the Hospital from the entities listed on Exhibit “A” attached hereto. Each such solicitation shall include a copy of the RFP and a copy of the Statute. All proposals for the lease, sale, or conveyance of the Hospital must be received by April 19, 2024, in order to be considered by the Board of Commissioners.

(4) Any entity interested in leasing or purchasing the Hospital shall provide to the County Manager information as to charges, services and indigent care at similar facilities owned or operated by the proposed lessee or purchaser.

(5) The Board of Commissioners reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to accept the proposal that it determines, in its sole and absolute discretion, is in the best interests of Stokes County and its citizens.

(6) The Board of Commissioners intends to negotiate a contract for the lease, sale, or conveyance of the Hospital with the entity that submits the proposal accepted by the Board of Commissioners.

(7) A public hearing on this Resolution of Intent shall be held at the beginning of the Regular Meeting on April 8, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Chambers, Administration Building, 1014 Main Street, Danbury, North Carolina 27016

Adopted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024

---

Brad Chandler, Chairman  
Stokes County Board of Commissioners

---

Attest: Amber Brown  
Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners



## **Exhibit A - Direct solicitation proposals**

### **Novant Health**

Chad Setliff  
President, Greater Winston-Salem Market  
3333 Silas Creek Parkway  
Winston-Salem, NC 27103  
(336) 718-5000

### **Cone Health**

Mary Jo Cagle, M.D.  
1200 North Elm Street  
Greensboro, NC 2740  
(336) 832-7000

### **Atrium Health – Wake Forest Baptist**

Julie A. Freischlag, MD, FACS, FRCSEd(Hon), DFSVS, MAMSE  
Chief Executive Officer, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist  
Medical Center Boulevard  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27157  
(336) 716-2011

### **Hugh Chatham Health**

Paul H. Hammes, FACHE  
Chief Executive Officer  
180 Parkwood Drive  
Elkin, NC 2862  
(336) 527-7000

### **Northern Regional Hospital**

Chris A. Lumsden  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
830 Rockford Street  
Mt. Airy, NC 27030  
336-719-7000

### **UNC Health - Rockingham**

Steve Eblin  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
117 E Kings Hwy  
Eden, NC 27288  
336-623-9711

### **Tenor Health Partners Stokes, LLC**

Radha A Savitala, Founder

### **Stokes Medical Management Group, LLC**

Pamela P. Tillman, Chief Executive Officer  
Julie C. Farmer, Chief Operations Officer  
113 Gayle Drive  
King, NC 27021  
336-354-8143

Stokes County  
Request for Proposals  
(RFP) for Lease, Sale  
or Conveyance of  
Stokes Reynolds  
Memorial Hospital

Date: March 11, 2024

The Stokes County Board of Commissioners of Stokes County, North Carolina adopted a resolution declaring its intent to sell, lease or convey Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital. In accordance with the Resolution and the provisions of Part 1, Article 2, Chapter 131E of the NC General Statutes, the Board of Commissioners is required to solicit proposals for the sale, lease or conveyance of the Hospital. The purpose of this RFP is to invite organizations to submit a proposal. The County is under no obligation or responsibility to accept any proposal and reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

The hospital and related properties are currently leased to a lessee. The lessee has proposed to assign the current lease agreement to a new lessee. If you wish to be considered for an assignment of the current lease, a new lease, or sale; it will be necessary for you to enter into an agreement with the current lessee for the assignment of the lease and acquisition of the operating assets with provision for the payment or assumption of existing debt.

The current lease term expires July 31, 2026; subject to two five- year renewal options. Proposals should include your position on assuming the current lease or pursuing other options with respect to a new lease, sale or conveyance.

## **Hospital Facilities Description**

Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital (License #H0165) is a federally recognized Critical Access Hospital with three campus locations; Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital in Danbury, Dr. JR Jones Medical Center in King, and Rural Health Clinic in Pine Hall. These are described as follows:

Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital, Inc. ("SRMH")  
1570 NC 8 & 89 Hwy North  
P.O. Box 10  
Danbury, NC 27016

The SRMH campus in Danbury includes a full time Emergency Department with five treatment rooms and 53 licensed inpatient general acute care beds (25 of these beds are staffed) and 40 nursing facility beds that comprise the Stokes Reynolds Skilled Nursing Facility. This hospital campus location provides diagnostic imaging services including computed radiography. Surgical capacity at this location includes two licensed operating rooms for shared inpatient and ambulatory surgery. Ancillary services include laboratory, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and respiratory therapy. The Hospital

also operates a Rural Health Clinic and Pediatric Clinic on the Danbury Campus. The total gross square footage of the hospital facility is 52,330.

Dr. J.R. Jones Medical Center  
402 West King Street  
P.O. Box 410  
King, NC 27021

Located in southwestern Stokes County, the Dr. J.R. Jones Medical Center is licensed as part of Stokes-Reynolds Memorial Hospital and includes ambulatory surgery, endoscopy and outpatient diagnostic services, including limited laboratory services. Surgical capacity at this location includes two licensed operating rooms for ambulatory surgery and a licensed dedicated endoscopy room. The Hospital partners with specialty physicians to provide orthopedics and ophthalmology. This location previously included emergency services. The Dr. J.R. Jones Medical Center totals 12,378 square feet.

Located in southeastern Stokes County, the Hospital operates rural health clinic services in leased space at the Pine Hall Community Center, 3853 US 311 Hwy N, Pine Hall, NC 27042. Diagnostic Imaging is available at this location.

## **Property, Facilities and Equipment**

The land, buildings and physical property owned by the hospital is described in the attached spread sheet "SRMH Statement of Values."

## **CON Applications**

According to hospital officials, there are no CON applications that are pending review or development.

## **Service Area Demographics**

The majority of inpatients and long-term care patients originate from Stokes County, making it the primary services area for Stokes-Reynolds Memorial Hospital. Ambulatory surgery patients who obtain service at Dr. J.R. Jones Medical Center reflect a mix of patients with most originating from Stokes and Forsyth County.

A high percentage of Stokes County inpatients and ambulatory patients are served by Novant Health and Atrium Wake Forest Baptist Health. While these facilities offer considerable depth of tertiary care in Winston-Salem, Stokes-Reynolds Hospital fulfills a vital role in providing access to Emergency Department, outpatient and inpatient care as well as nursing facility care to Stokes County residents within their home county.

## **Statutory Requirements:**

Pursuant to NCGS 131E-13, the County may lease, sell, or convey the hospital facilities to a corporation, foreign or domestic, authorized to do business in North Carolina, subject to the following conditions which shall be included in the lease, agreement of sale, or agreement of conveyance:

1. The corporation shall continue to provide the same or similar clinical hospital services to its patients in medical-surgery, obstetrics, pediatrics, out-patient and emergency treatment, including emergency services for the indigent, that the hospital facility provided prior to the lease, sale, or conveyance. These services may be terminated only as prescribed by Certificate of Need Law prescribed in Article 9 of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes, or, if Certificate of Need Law is inapplicable, by review procedure designed to guarantee public participation pursuant to rules adopted by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

2. The corporation shall ensure that indigent care is available to the population of the county or area served by the hospital authority at levels related to need, as previously demonstrated and determined mutually by the county or hospital authority and the corporation

3. The corporation shall not enact financial admission policies that have the effect of denying essential medical services or treatment solely because of a patient's immediate inability to pay for the services or treatment.

4. The corporation shall ensure that admission to and services of the facility are available to beneficiaries of governmental reimbursement programs (Medicaid/Medicare) without discrimination or preference because they are beneficiaries of those programs.

5. The corporation shall prepare an annual report that shows compliance with the requirements of the lease, sale, or conveyance.

The corporation shall further agree that if it fails to substantially comply with these conditions, or if it fails to operate the facility as a community general hospital open to the general public and free of discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, or national origin unless relieved of this responsibility by operation of law, or if the corporation dissolves without a successor corporation to carry out the terms and conditions of the lease, agreement of sale, or agreement of conveyance, all ownership or other rights in the hospital facility, including the building, land and equipment associated with the hospital, shall revert to the county or successor entity originally conveying the hospital; provided that any building, land, or equipment associated with the hospital facility that the corporation has constructed or acquired since the sale may

revert only upon payment to the corporation of a sum equal to the cost less depreciation of the building, land, or equipment.

### **Certifications Required for Proposal**

Each Proposer is required to propose a sale, lease, or other conveyance in the proposal submitted, and certify each of the following:

1. The proposer shall operate the hospital as a community general hospital open to the general public without discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex or national origin.
2. The proposer shall continue to provide the same or similar clinical hospital services in medical-surgery, pediatrics, outpatient and emergency treatment, including emergency services for indigent, that the hospital provided prior to the lease or sale of the hospital.
3. The proposer shall ensure that indigent care is available to the population of the area served by the hospital at levels related to need, as previously demonstrated and determined mutually by the County and the proposer.
4. The proposer shall ensure that admission to, and services of the hospital, are available to beneficiaries of governmental reimbursement programs without discrimination or preference because they are beneficiaries of such programs.
5. Neither proposer nor its affiliated companies has been indicted or convicted of any criminal offense that could result in exclusion of the proposer or an affiliate being excluded from Medicare, Medicaid or other federal healthcare programs.
6. Proposer and its affiliated companies have never been suspended or excluded from participation in Medicare, Medicaid or other Federal healthcare programs.
7. Proposer has adequate financial resources available to lease or purchase the hospital facilities and operate the hospital facilities, as documented by copies of the most recent audited financial statements or other supporting financial information which should be included with the proposal.
8. Proposer has full legal and/or corporate authority to submit its binding proposal, as evidenced by certified copy of board minutes, which should be included with the proposal.
9. Proposer shall certify whether it participates in any other managed care programs in which hospital is not currently participating; and whether proposer plans that the covered services under such new managed care plan will be offered to the leased facilities in Stokes County under such program.
10. Proposer shall certify whether it proposes operations on a for-profit or non-profit basis

## Instructions for Submitting Proposals

Proposer shall submit eight (8) hard copies and one electronic copy in PDF form of the proposals for sale, lease or conveyance, in an envelope clearly marked as "Hospital Proposal." Proposals must be received on or before 4:00 p.m. on **April 19, 2024**, by hand delivery, or otherwise physically delivered by public or private carriers or delivery services, including, but not limited to US Postal Service Certified Mail with return receipt requested, UPS "United Parcel Service" FEDEX "Federal Express or by any other delivery method with receipt of said proposals, to:

### Mailing Address

Stokes County

Attn: Amber Brown, Interim County Manager/Clerk to the Board

1014 Main Street

PO Box 20

Danbury, NC 27016

### Office Location

Stokes County

Attn: Amber Brown, Interim County Manager/Clerk to the Board

Ronald Reagan Building

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

1014 Main Street

Danbury, NC 27016

Requests for additional information must be submitted by **April 5, 2024**.

If desired, site visits will be coordinated and conducted by the Stokes County staff.

All proposals will be evaluated as submitted but the County reserves the right to request more information. Interviews will be conducted as needed. Although proposals will become a public document, they will be reviewed by the Commissioners in closed session, and will be made available to the public only when the County gives notice of a public hearing on the proposals.

Anticipated Date of Award is **May 13, 2024**.



## **Proposal Preparation Instructions**

Please provide the following information in your proposal:

1. Describe the organizational and ownership structure of the proposer. Include the full name of the company, its state of organization, the date of its organization, its mailing and street addresses, telephone number, email and the name of the person to contact. Please provide the same information for each subsidiary and affiliate of the company which is engaged in the operation of a hospital.
2. Provide names of the directors and principal officers of the proposer and each subsidiary, and a brief summary of the experience of each person in the healthcare industry. Also describe the management team that will be operating the hospital and provide a copy of their individual resumes. This description should also describe where these individuals will be geographically located as they perform their functions. An example would be the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and whether that person would be physically located at the hospital or elsewhere.
3. Describe the proposer / management team's number of years of operational experience operating licensed hospitals including critical access hospitals. Experience of the proposer's affiliates or predecessor companies may be submitted with explanation of relationship to proposer's current management team.
4. Provide copies of the audited financial statements of the proposer and each subsidiary (including all footnotes and auditor's letters) for the last three fiscal years and unaudited interim statements for the current period.
5. Please provide a copy of attorneys' letters regarding pending and threatened claims and investigations for the proposer and each subsidiary for each of the last three fiscal years.
6. Provide a statement as to whether or not the proposer, any subsidiary or any shareholder, officer or director of the proposer or any subsidiary has ever been suspended or excluded from or denied participation in any federal health care program, including without limitation Medicare, Medicaid and TRICARE. Please indicate whether there are any threatened or ongoing investigations relating to Medicare, Medicaid or TRICARE.
7. Provide a statement as to whether or not the licensure or accreditation of the proposer or any Subsidiary, or any hospital owned or operated by the proposer or any Subsidiary of the Company, has ever been suspended, revoked or denied.
8. Provide a listing of the insurance coverage maintained by the proposer and each Subsidiary, including without limitation, professional liability, general liability and officers

and directors coverage. Please include the name of each insurance company and provide the coverage limits and deductibles under each policy.

9. Provide a copy of the indigent care policies in effect at hospitals owned, operated, or managed by the proposer and any subsidiary.

10. Provide a copy of the most recent community benefit report or reports of the proposer and its subsidiaries.

11. Provide a complete list of services provided by the hospitals owned and operated by the proposer and its subsidiaries.

### **Matters to be Discussed in the Proposals**

Please discuss the following matters in your proposal:

1. How you propose to structure the transaction, including the amount you are willing to pay for the purchase or lease of the Hospital real estate and the purchase of the non-real estate Hospital assets.
2. Describe your vision for providing health care services in the Hospital's service area and strategy you plan to employ to implement any changes necessary to achieve the vision.
3. How you propose to grow the Hospital's inpatient and outpatient volumes.
4. Describe your plan to reduce patient outmigration.
5. Give examples of successful growth strategies that you have utilized.
6. Do you plan to make changes to the medical staff structure at the Hospital? If so, please describe your proposed changes.
7. Does the proposer or any of its subsidiaries operate a hospitalist program? If so, please describe the program.
8. Specifically describe the proposer's experience in physician recruitment and management of physician practices. What financial arrangements (income guarantees, loans, other financial assistance) does the proposer contemplate using when recruiting physicians?
9. Describe the proposer's policies and programs regarding access to care for indigent and uninsured patients, including your specific experience with providing indigent care.

10. Describe the commitment to help the Hospital access sufficient capital to address its facility, physician recruitment and other requirements for long-term financial stability and ability to support clinical excellence in the future.
11. Describe the information technology features the Company could offer to the Hospital. Include your plans to ensure an adequate electronic medical records (EMR) system for the hospital.
12. Your commitment to continued employment of current Hospital employees and continuation of equivalent benefits, including without limitation, retirement benefits.
13. Your commitment to work with the county government to plan, develop construct and license new critical access hospital facilities in Danbury and the City of King within five (5) years of taking over.
14. Your record of regulatory compliance in any previous operation or management of a critical access hospital and/or skilled nursing facility.
15. Your commitment to maintain appropriate amounts of insurance coverage including without limitation, professional liability coverage and “tail” coverage to protect the County after the lease or sale of the Hospital.
16. Provide information on how the lease, or sale of the Hospital to your organization will provide for the health-related needs of medically underserved groups such as low-income persons, racial and ethnic minorities, and handicapped persons.
17. Provide information on charges, services, and indigent care at similar facilities owned, operated, or managed by the proposer and its subsidiaries.
18. Provide information and examples of your commitment to support psychiatric and mental health services and coordination of care through the hospital emergency department. Please describe your experience regarding innovative methods for assessment and coordination of care or including telepsychiatry.
19. Describe your plan for operating the Stokes-Reynolds Skilled Nursing Facility component of the hospital.
20. Provide information and examples of your commitment to support Stokes County EMS and other county departments
21. Address requirements to obtain physician examination of employees with workers compensation injuries during and after normal business hours.

22. Address your commitment to support public health initiatives and partnering with the Stokes County Health Department.
23. Address your plan for marketing the hospital in Stokes and surrounding counties to increase patient numbers.
24. Address your plan for regular meetings and communications on the status of the hospital operations with the county commissioners. Also, include what your on-site local presence will look like to support daily operations of the hospital and its satellite facilities.
25. Address your plans for billing to ensure revenues are received in a manner to support operational cash flow requirements and cash reserve requirements.
26. Describe your prior experience in operating a critical access hospital. If the proposer has not operated a critical access hospital, please provide any additional information that should be considered by county decision makers on why they should take a chance on the company operating its first critical access hospital in Stokes County.
27. Describe how your policy or a proposed policy for determining whether or not a patient would qualify for charity care.
28. Describe your experience operating or performing other functions associated with skilled nursing facilities.

### **Evaluation Criteria for Proposals**

The following evaluation criteria will be used and points awarded from the total number of points assigned to each of the criteria.

1. Experience operating or performing other functions associated with critical access hospitals (25 points)
2. Financial assets available to successfully assume operation of the hospital without financial contribution by Stokes County Government. Economic feasibility of proposed transaction structure (25 points)
3. Experience operating or performing other functions associated with skilled nursing facilities (20 points)
4. Overall past performance of entity submitting proposal based on information provided in this proposal (15 points)
5. Unique qualifications of entity submitting proposal that might contribute to the success of the hospital (15 points)

Loc	Description	Address	City	State	Zip Code	Building
1	Hospital/Nursing Home	1570 NC 8 and 89 Hwy N,	Danbury	NC	27016	\$ 13,597,040
2	Engineering shop, Lawnmower building	1570 NC 8 and 89 Hwy N	Danbury	NC	27016	\$ 110,000
3	Storage Bld	1570 NC 8 and 89 Hwy N	Danbury	NC	27016	\$ 110,000
4	Building 200	1570 NC 8 and 89 Hwy N	Danbury	NC	27016	\$ 234,323
5	Pediatric Clinic	1030 Hospice Dr.	Danbury	NC	27016	\$ 141,570
6	Dr. J.R. Jones Medical Center	402 W. King Street	King	NC	27021	\$ 869,110
7	Pine Hall Clinic/Community Center	3853 US 311 Hwy N	Pine Hall	NC	27042	\$ -



**Board of County Commissioners**

**March 11, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

**Item number: VII.f.**

**Danbury Planning and Zoning Board ETJ Appointment**

Contact: Interim Manager/Clerk to the Board Amber Brown

**Summary:**

Danbury Planning and Zoning Board ETJ Member Melinda Ring's term expired in December 2023. A new Danbury ETJ Member needs to be appointed to fill this vacancy. The Danbury Town Council voted to recommend Jacob Elsdon be appointed by the Board of Commissioners to fill this position.

Attached is Mr. Elsdon's resume along with an appointment request letter from Town Manager Mike Barsness.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Jacob Elsdon Resume	3/8/2024	Cover Memo
Danbury ETJ Appointment Request	3/8/2024	Cover Memo



# Jacob Elsdon

*Current:*  
495 Seven Island Rd  
Danbury, NC 27016

Jake.Elsdon@gmail.com  
*Height: 6'1" Weight: 210#*  
*DOB: 9/29/1986*

- Objective** To earn a position working as a zoning officer for the town of Danbury, NC.
- Education**
- Sonoran Desert Institute (SDI)**  
**Certificate of Firearms Technology – Gunsmithing** In Progress  
CGPA 4.0/4.0, to be completed January 2024
- Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU), Prescott, AZ**  
**Bachelor of Science in Aeronautics** Dec 2012  
Minor in Applied Meteorology  
CGPA 3.3/4.0
- Chaffey College, Rancho Cucamonga, CA**  
**Associate of Science in Business Administration** May 2010
- Certificates** Private Pilot License; Airplane Single Engine Land  
NC Class A Commercial Driver License, current DOT Medical
- Experience**
- Great Lakes Cold Logistics, Warrendale, PA** Sep 2018 – Present  
*Class A Commercial Driver*
- Operate a commercial combination vehicle subject to the FMCSA regulations approximately 2500-3000 miles per week.
  - Perform pre-trip/post-trip inspections and ensure proper operation of the air brakes system, manage schedule to comply with E-Log work hours per the DOT, and coordinate with dispatch and third-party brokers for the safe and on-time delivery of all loads.
- Advance School of Driving, Fontana, CA** Spring 2016 –2018  
*Class A CDL Driver Instructor*
- Operating a commercial combination class A vehicle as a Driver Instructor under the standards contained in the California Private Postsecondary Education Act of 2009 and Division 7.5 of Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations.
  - Instruct and train four student drivers per week in a combination vehicle on backing skills to include the practice of straight-backing, offset-parking, parallel-parking, and the alley-dock. Instruct over the road on shifting basics using a 10-speed manual transmission, situational awareness, speed control with respect to safe braking distance, turning corners basics with a trailer, reading road signs regarding commercial vehicles, and more to prepare students for the DMV exam.
- Skills**
- Effective communicator  
Valuable team member  
Independent problem solver

# Town of Danbury

201 Courthouse Circle  
P.O. Box 4  
Danbury, NC 27016  
(336) 593-2002  
Fax- (336) 593-2019  
Email – [admin@townofdanbury1957.org](mailto:admin@townofdanbury1957.org)

Janet S. Whitt, Mayor  
W. Eugene Russell, Town Attorney

Mike Barsness, Town Administrator  
Dianne Starnes, Town Clerk

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February 29, 2024

Amber Brown  
Stokes County Manager  
PO Box 20  
Danbury, NC 27016

RE: Danbury ETJ Appointment

Dear Amber:

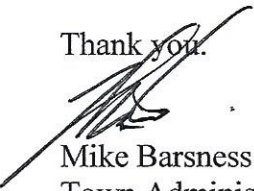
The term for Danbury Planning & Zoning Board ETJ member Melinda Ring expired on December 8, 2023. Unfortunately she has had a lengthy illness and recently passed. Article II of the Danbury Zoning Ordinance requires reappointment or replacement of board members at the end of their respective three-year term.

The Danbury Town Council, at their regular February meeting, voted to recommend Jacob Elsdon be appointed by Stokes County Commissioners to replace Mrs. Ring as a Danbury ETJ member.

Mr. Elsdon and his family are relatively new members of the Danbury ETJ and want to be contributing members to the community.

Please present this request to the Stokes County Board of Commissioners for consideration at the appropriate time and advise us of their decision at your earliest convenience.

Thank you.



Mike Barsness  
Town Administrator

Attachment: Jacob Elsdon Resume



## **Board of County Commissioners**

**March 11, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

**Item number: VIII.a.**

### **Approval of Amended Administrative Contracts**

Contact: Chairman Brad Chandler

#### **Summary:**

The Board of Commissioners are currently in the process of recruiting and hiring the County Manager position. While this process has been started, it will not be completed for several months.

Assistant County Manager/Clerk to the Board Amber Brown is currently serving as Interim Manager through a contract with the Board of Commissioners. Part-time administrative support has been provided by Darlene Bullins to assist with minutes and other duties during this time since only one of the manager positions is filled (via a contract with the Board). Both contracts expire March 17, 2024.

At the last meeting, the Board of Commissioners unanimously agreed to extend both contracts until summer when a permanent manager would be hired and the need for an interim manager or administrative support P/T person no longer existed. Attached are the two amended contracts for review and approval.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Amended Interim County Manager Contract	3/8/2024	Cover Memo
Amended Administrative Support Contract - Bullins	3/8/2024	Cover Memo

NORTH CAROLINA

STOKES COUNTY

INTERIM COUNTY MANAGER  
EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT  
(AMENDED)

THIS EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT is made and entered into this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024, by and between the County of Stokes, (the “County”), Employer; and Amber N. Brown (“Brown”), Employee;

**RECITALS:**

1. The County is a body politic organized and existing under the laws of the State of North Carolina, and duly authorized to enter into this employment contract; and
2. Brown has been serving as Assistant County Manager since June 1, 2021 and is also currently serving as Clerk to the Board; and
3. County desires to enter into an employment contract with Brown under the terms of which Brown would continue to serve as Clerk to the Board, and also serve as Interim County Manager for Stokes County for the period beginning March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and ending when a new County Manager is hired and begins work, but no later than July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024; and
4. Brown has agreed to continue serving as Clerk to the Board, and also serve as Interim County Manager for Stokes County in accordance with the terms and conditions hereinafter set forth;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants hereinafter set forth, the parties agree as follows:

5. The County hereby employs Brown to continue to serve as Clerk to the Board, and also to serve Interim Stokes County Manager; and Brown hereby accepts said employment, and agrees to perform the additional duties of Interim County Manager as specified in North Carolina General Statute 153A-82, which is incorporated herein by reference and made a part of this Contract.
6. County shall provide administrative support to Brown to assist her in performing the duties of her dual position as Clerk to the Board and Interim County Manager.
7. It is understood and agreed that this employment is a full time obligation; and that Brown will not pursue any other employment during the term of this Contract without the written consent of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.
8. The term of this contract begins on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and ends when a new County Manager is hired and begins work, but no later than July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. During the contract period, Brown

shall serve at the pleasure of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners; and Brown's employment may be terminated at any time.

9. In the event that Brown should voluntarily resign her position as Clerk to the Board and Interim County Manager, she shall give the County not less than thirty (30) days written notice. During this notice period, Brown shall, at the option of the Board of County Commissioners, continue to work in the capacity of Clerk to the Board and Interim County Manager with the benefits of her existing compensation. Upon the termination of Brown's employment by reason of voluntary resignation, she shall receive no further compensation or benefits under this Contract.

10. In the event that Brown becomes permanently disabled because of sickness, accident, injury, mental incapacity or other health related issue, and is unable to continue to perform her duties; the Board of Commissioners shall have the option of terminating this Contract, and Brown shall receive no further compensation or benefits under this Contract after the date of termination.

11. Brown shall receive annual compensation in the amount of \$95,000.00 for her services as Clerk to the Board and Interim County Manager during the term of this contract. Compensation shall be paid monthly on the same schedule as payment to other County employees. Brown shall also be entitled to cost of living increases to her salary as may be approved by the Board of County Commissioners for all County employees. Brown shall also receive such other benefits from her employment to the same extent as regular County employees. The compensation stated herein is based on the recommended salary study range.

12. Brown shall communicate with the Stokes County Board of Commissioners and accept directives therefrom primarily through the Chairman of the Board, though all Commissioners shall have the right to communicate with the Manager. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in the event there is a conflict between the communications or directives of the Chairman of the Board and another Commissioner, Brown shall be entitled and instructed to rely on and accept the communications and directives of the Chairman.

13. Brown shall be evaluated by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners on a quarterly basis, and shall comply with any directives of the Board based on the evaluation. Brown may also be eligible for a salary increase, in the sole discretion of the Board, after an evaluation based on her performance.

14. This Contract may not be amended or modified except by written amendment approved by Brown and the Stokes County Board of Commissioners, and signed by Brown and the Chairman of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.

15. This Contract shall be interpreted under the laws of the State of North Carolina; and it is agreed and stipulated that jurisdiction under this contract shall be exclusively in the General Court of Justice in Stokes County, North Carolina.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the County of Stokes has caused this Contract to be signed and executed in its behalf by its Chairman of the Board of Commissioners pursuant to approval

by the Board on \_\_\_\_\_, and Brown has signed and executed this Contract, both in duplicate originals, the date first written above.

County of Stokes

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Rick Morris, Chairman  
Board of Commissioners

\_\_\_\_\_  
Amber N. Brown

This instrument has been pre-audited in the manner required by the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Finance Officer

Approved as to form and legal sufficiency.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stokes County Attorney



NORTH CAROLINA

STOKES COUNTY

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT  
CONTRACT (AMENDED)

THIS CONTRACT is made and entered into this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024, by and between the County of Stokes, (the “County”); and Darlene Bullins (“Bullins”);

**RECITALS:**

1. The County is a body politic organized and existing under the laws of the State of North Carolina, and duly authorized to enter into this contract; and
2. The County desires to enter into contract with Bullins under the terms of which Bullins would serve as part- time Administrative Assistant to Amber Brown, the Interim County Manager for Stokes County, for the period beginning March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and ending when a new County Manager is hired and begins work, but no later than July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024; and

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual promises and covenants hereinafter set forth, the parties agree as follows:

3. The County hereby contracts with Bullins to perform duties as part-time Administrative Assistant to Amber Brown, Interim Stokes County Manager; and Bullins hereby agrees to perform said duties.
4. Bullins shall provide administrative support to Brown in performing the duties of her dual position as Clerk to the Board and Interim County Manager, as well as her duties in her roles as Budget Officer and Personnel Officer. Bullins shall also provide administrative support to Brown upon special projects as needed.
5. It is understood and agreed that this employment is a part-time obligation; that Bullins is an independent contractor and not an employee of Stokes County.
6. The term of this contract begins on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and continues indefinitely, but no later than July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. During the contract period, Bullins shall report to, and take work directives from the Interim County Manager, and work such number of hours as may be determined from time to time by the Interim County Manager.
7. Bullins shall receive total compensation in the amount of Fifty Dollars (\$50.00) per hour for her services as Administrative Assistant during the term of this contract. Compensation shall be paid monthly. Bullins shall not receive any other benefits. No minimum amount of hours is guaranteed under this contract.

8. This Contract may not be amended or modified except by written amendment approved by Bullins and the Stokes County Board of Commissioners, and signed by Bullins and the Chairman of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.
9. This Contract shall be interpreted under the laws of the State of North Carolina; and it is agreed and stipulated that jurisdiction under this contract shall be exclusively in the General Court of Justice in Stokes County, North Carolina.
10. This Contract shall comply with all North Carolina Local Government Re-Employment Requirements.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the County of Stokes has caused this Contract to be signed and executed in its behalf by its Chairman of the Board of Commissioners pursuant to approval by the Board on \_\_\_\_\_, and Bullins has signed and executed this Contract, both in duplicate originals, the date first written above.

County of Stokes

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Brad Chandler, Chairman  
Board of Commissioners

\_\_\_\_\_  
Darlene Bullins

This instrument has been pre-audited in the manner required by the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Finance Officer

Approved as to form and legal sufficiency.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Stokes County Attorney



**Board of County Commissioners  
March 11, 2024  
6:00 PM**

**Item number: VIII.b.**

**Proclamation Recognizing Frances Carroll's 100th Birthday**

Contact:

Summary:

Stokes County resident Frances Carroll is celebrating her 100th Birthday on March 13, 2024. The Stokes County Board of Commissioners would like to present a proclamation recognizing her.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Proclamation Recognizing Frances Carroll	3/9/2024	Cover Memo



## PROCLAMATION

IN RECOGNITION OF FRANCES CARROLL'S 100<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY

**WHEREAS**, Frances Carroll will be honored by friends and relatives on the occasion of her 100th birthday on March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, she was born in 1924 on March 13<sup>th</sup> and has been a dedicated resident of this community; and

**WHEREAS**, she became the wife of William Columbus Carroll and this marriage was blessed with one daughter Laura Beth Carroll; and

**WHEREAS**, in addition to being a wife and mother, she has been active in church and civic responsibilities, including being a member of Rock Hill Church since 1949; and

**WHEREAS**, during a long and productive lifetime, she is considered to be a blessing by everyone that knows her; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the Stokes County Board of Commissioners, do hereby deem it an honor and pleasure to extend this Certificate of Recognition to Frances Carroll on the occasion of her 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday, with sincere congratulations and best wishes for many more happy, productive years.

This the 11<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2024.

Attest:

---

**Brad Chandler- Chairman**

---

**Amber Brown – Clerk to the Board**



## **Board of County Commissioners**

**March 11, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

**Item number: VIII.c.**

### **Stokes County Health Department Fee Increase Request**

Contact: Health Director, Tammy Martin

#### **Summary:**

The Board of Health has approved the attached fee increases for the Stokes County Health Department. The fee increase also requires approval from the Board of Commissioners.

#### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
SC Health Department Fee Increase Request	3/8/2024	Cover Memo

**Stokes County Health Department Fees Increase Request**

<b>CPT CODE</b>	<b>CPT TITLE</b>	<b>CURRENT CHARGE</b>	<b>NEW CHARGE</b>
S0280	Medical Home Program, Comprehensive Care	\$50.00	\$74.00
S0281	Medical Home Program, Maintenance Of Plan	\$150.00	\$221.00
59425	Predelivery Care 4-6 Visits	\$500.00	\$567.00
59426	Predelivery Care 7 Or More Visits	\$800.00	\$1,013.00





**Board of County Commissioners**

**March 11, 2024**

**6:00 PM**

**Item number: VIII.d.**

**Letter of Engagement for Womble Bond Dickinson**

Contact: Ty Browder, County Attorney

**Summary:**

Attached is a letter of engagement for enlisting the services of Womble Bond Dickinson with the review of lease arrangement for the hospital. The County is no longer utilizing the services of Turning Point Healthcare Advisors but will be using this firm instead. So, funding is already appropriated for this purpose at this time.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Letter of Engagement	3/8/2024	Cover Memo



**February 26, 2024**

Ty Browder  
County Attorney  
Stokes County  
Danbury, NC 27016

**Via E-mail: [tybrowder@browder-overby.com](mailto:tybrowder@browder-overby.com)**

Womble Bond Dickinson (US) LLP

300 North Greene Street  
Suite 1900  
Greensboro, NC 27401

t: 336.574.8030  
f: 336.574.4520

Thomas S. Stukes  
Partner  
Direct Dial: 336-574-8065  
Direct Fax: 336-574-4515  
E-mail: [Tom.Stukes@wbd-us.com](mailto:Tom.Stukes@wbd-us.com)

**Re: Letter of Engagement of Womble Bond Dickinson (US) LLP**

Dear Mr. Browder:

The purpose of this letter is to confirm the terms and conditions upon which Womble Bond Dickinson (US) LLP (the "firm") has agreed to assist Stokes County, North Carolina (the "County") with a review of a new lease arrangement for LifeBrite Community Hospital of Stokes located in Danbury, North Carolina (the "Matter").

If you should wish for us to represent it in subsequent matters, that work would be the subject of additional discussions and an update to this letter or an additional letter similar to this one covering the terms of our engagements in those subsequent matters.

We will bill monthly for our time and disbursements. Our hourly rates range from \$925.00 for our most experienced partners to \$255.00 for our most junior associates; my current rate is \$750.00 per hour. These billing rates are subject to adjustment from time to time by the firm without prior notice.

Attachment A to this letter reflects our policy in regard to our billing for costs and disbursements, which are in addition to our fees. Expenses we may make or incur on behalf of the County may include, as applicable, travel expenses, delivery charges, file reproduction costs, computer research charges, filing fees and the like. Our statement for fees and expenses will be rendered monthly and will be due upon receipt. Any statement which is not paid within thirty (30) days of its date will be considered past due. Past due billings will accrue interest at the rate of 1½% per month (18% per annum) until paid. Failure to completely pay a statement within thirty (30) days of its date shall constitute grounds for withdrawal as counsel, to which the County hereby consents in advance.

Our law firm is a multi-jurisdictional law firm representing many clients and handling a large number of complex matters each year. As a result, conflict of interest issues arise and, from time to time, may even include disputes between the firm and our own clients over the handling



of a matter. Under such circumstances, we need the ability to seek analysis of our obligations from our General Counsel's office without waiving the firm's own attorney-client privilege. We believe that seeking advice is in our clients' interest as well as our own. Accordingly, in signing this agreement, the County consents to our seeking advice from our General Counsel's office on legal ethics or related issues that may arise during our representation of the County and that our representation of the County shall not, thereby, waive any attorney-client privilege that we may have to protect the confidentiality of our communication with counsel.

Unless previously terminated, our representation of the County in this matter will terminate upon our sending our final statement for services rendered in the matter. We will return to the County, upon its request, any materials the County has furnished us in connection with the matter. Thereupon, we will store files respecting this matter for a minimum of six years following the conclusion of our representation in this matter, and we will provide the County with access to those files upon request. After six years from the conclusion of our representation in this matter, we will review the stored files with respect to whether they should be retained or destroyed. We disclaim any obligation to provide further notice to the County before destroying the files concerning this matter.

In an effort to deliver cost effective services, our firm uses legal support service providers located both inside and outside the U.S. to assist with help desk and technology issues, word processing, time entry, and other administrative tasks. In order for these service providers to complete these tasks, we must share certain client information. We have made reasonable efforts to ensure that these services are performed in a manner that is consistent with our firm's obligations under the relevant Rules of Professional Conduct with regards to maintaining client confidentiality and supervision of non-lawyer assistants, and the firm bears responsibility for the resulting work product. As part of the engagement with the firm, the County agrees and consents to the use of the services of these providers in the manner stated above.

Please note that our representation of the County does not give rise to an attorney-client relationship between us and any of the affiliates or constituents of the County, including officers or employees. The County therefore agrees that it will not give us confidential information regarding any of those parties during the course of our representation of the County. Accordingly, our representation in this matter of the County will not give rise to any conflict of interest in the event one of our other clients is adverse to any such other of those parties.

In order to enable us to render our services effectively, the County will fully and accurately disclose all facts and keep us advised of all developments relating to the matter. The County will otherwise fully cooperate with us and will be available to attend meetings, telephone conferences and any other proceedings necessary to our representation in this matter.

If the foregoing correctly reflects your understanding of the terms and conditions of our representation of the County, please indicate acceptance by executing the enclosed copy of this letter in the space provided below and return it to me, keeping a copy for your file. Please note that if you do not sign and return this letter, the giving of instructions by the County will constitute the County's full acceptance of the terms and conditions set forth herein and attached.



We are pleased to have this opportunity to be of service and to work with the County.

Best regards,

**Womble Bond Dickinson (US) LLP**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "T. Stukes", is positioned below the firm name.

Thomas S. Stukes  
Partner

AGREED TO AND ACCEPTED:

**Stokes County, North Carolina**

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## **Attachment A**

### **Re: Policy in Regard to Billing for Costs and Disbursements**

Our philosophy is to minimize out-of-pocket expenses consistent with those required in conjunction with the legal services we provide. We manage our expenses on behalf of clients as if they were our personal expenses.

We will bill Company for costs and disbursements made on the Company's behalf as indicated below:

**Telephone and facsimile charges.** We will not normally bill for local or domestic long distance telephone service, cellular service, text messaging services, or facsimile transmissions or copies. We may bill for international phone calls at our cost without markup.

**Outside computer research** including, but not limited to, LexisNexis®, Westlaw®, or PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records). Computerized research will be billed at our best estimate of actual cost, without markup and after application of any and all applicable volume discounts.

**Filing fees** will be billed at the charges incurred by the firm.

**Travel expenses.** We will bill travel expenses at our cost without markup.

**Express delivery services** (Federal Express, Airborne, etc.). We will bill for the charges at the regular rate listed by the express delivery company.

**Court reporters, expert witnesses, accountants.** We will bill at our cost without markup.



**Board of County Commissioners**  
**March 11, 2024**  
**6:00 PM**

**Item number: VIII.e.**

**Resolution Declaring the Intent to Sell, Lease, or Convey Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital**

Contact:

Summary:

The Stokes County Board of Commissioners pursuant to NC General Statute 131E-13 will consider adopting a resolution at the March 11, 2024 Commissioners Meeting declaring the intent to sell, lease, or convey Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital. This resolution is attached for consideration.

At this meeting, when the resolution of intent is adopted, the statute requires the governing body to request proposals for lease or purchase by direct solicitation of potential lessees or buyers. Attached for consideration and approval also is the Request for Proposals (RFP) document.

General Statute 131E-13: Document ([ncleg.gov](http://ncleg.gov))

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Upload Date	Type
Resolution of Intent	3/9/2024	Cover Memo
Exhibit A - Direct Solicitations	3/10/2024	Cover Memo
Request for Proposals (RFP)	3/9/2024	Cover Memo
SRMH Statement of Values - Attachment for RFP	3/9/2024	Cover Memo
Approved Hospital RFP	3/13/2024	Cover Memo





**RESOLUTION DECLARING THE INTENT OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE COUNTY OF STOKES, NORTH CAROLINA TO LEASE, SELL, OR CONVEY  
STOKES-REYNOLDS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**

**WHEREAS**, Stokes-Reynolds Memorial Hospital (the “Hospital”) is owned by the County of Stokes, North Carolina (the “County”); and

**WHEREAS**, the Hospital consists of the Stokes-Reynolds Memorial Hospital inpatient hospital facility located at 1570 NC Hwy 8 & 89 North, Danbury, North Carolina, and the J.R. Jones Medical Center outpatient facility located at 402 West King Street, King, North Carolina; and

**WHEREAS**, the Hospital also includes a forty (40) bed skilled nursing facility located at 1570 NC Hwy 8 & 89 North, Danbury, North Carolina; and

**WHEREAS**, the Hospital also includes a rural health clinic in leased space at the Pine Hall Community Center, located at 3853 US 311 Hwy N, Pine Hall, NC 27042; and

**WHEREAS**, the Hospital is leased as a community general hospital from the County of Stokes and the Stokes-Reynolds Memorial Hospital, Inc.

**WHEREAS**, The Board of Commissioners of the County (the “Board of Commissioners”), is interested in receiving proposals for the lease, sale or conveyance of the Hospital and intends to negotiate a contract to sell, lease or convey the Hospital; and

**WHEREAS**, any lease, sale or conveyance of the Hospital by the Board of Commissioners (i) shall be pursuant to the authority granted to the County by Part 1, Article 2, Chapter 131E of the North Carolina General Statutes (the “Statute”), and (ii) shall be in compliance with the procedures set out in the Statute, and any document of sale or lease shall include the conditions required by the Statute;

**WHEREAS**, in compliance with the Statute, the Board of Commissioners has given notice by publication of its intent to lease, sell or convey the Hospital and has given notice by certified mail to certain agencies of the State of North Carolina, as required by the Statute; and

**WHEREAS**, there has been presented to the Board of Commissioners a Request For Proposals for the lease, sale or conveyance of the Hospital which the County intends to send to prospective lessees and buyers.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF STOKES, NORTH CAROLINA RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

(1) The Board of Commissioners hereby declares its intent to lease, sell, or convey Stokes-Reynolds Memorial Hospital, pursuant to terms and conditions negotiated by the Board of Commissioners.

(2) The Board of Commissioners hereby approves the form and content of the Request For Proposals (the “RFP”) and hereby authorizes the County Manager of Stokes County to provide a copy of the RFP to any person who requests a copy.

(3) The County Manager shall directly solicit proposals for the lease, sale, or conveyance of the Hospital from the entities listed on Exhibit “A” attached hereto. Each such solicitation shall include a copy of the RFP and a copy of the Statute. All proposals for the lease, sale, or conveyance of the Hospital must be received by April 19, 2024, in order to be considered by the Board of Commissioners.

(4) Any entity interested in leasing or purchasing the Hospital shall provide to the County Manager information as to charges, services and indigent care at similar facilities owned or operated by the proposed lessee or purchaser.

(5) The Board of Commissioners reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to accept the proposal that it determines, in its sole and absolute discretion, is in the best interests of Stokes County and its citizens.

(6) The Board of Commissioners intends to negotiate a contract for the lease, sale, or conveyance of the Hospital with the entity that submits the proposal accepted by the Board of Commissioners.

(7) A public hearing on this Resolution of Intent shall be held at the beginning of the Regular Meeting on April 8, 2024, at 6:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Chambers, Administration Building, 1014 Main Street, Danbury, North Carolina 27016

Adopted this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2024

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Brad Chandler, Chairman  
Stokes County Board of Commissioners

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Attest: Amber Brown  
Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners

## **Exhibit A - Direct solicitation proposals**

### **Novant Health**

Chad Setliff  
President, Greater Winston-Salem Market  
3333 Silas Creek Parkway  
Winston-Salem, NC 27103  
(336) 718-5000

### **Cone Health**

Mary Jo Cagle, M.D.  
1200 North Elm Street  
Greensboro, NC 2740  
(336) 832-7000

### **Atrium Health – Wake Forest Baptist**

Julie A. Freischlag, MD, FACS, FRCSEd(Hon), DFSVS, MAMSE  
Chief Executive Officer, Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist  
Medical Center Boulevard  
Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27157  
(336) 716-2011

### **Hugh Chatham Health**

Paul H. Hammes, FACHE  
Chief Executive Officer  
180 Parkwood Drive  
Elkin, NC 2862  
(336) 527-7000

### **Northern Regional Hospital**

Chris A. Lumsden  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
830 Rockford Street  
Mt. Airy, NC 27030  
336-719-7000

### **UNC Health - Rockingham**

Steve Eblin  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
117 E Kings Hwy  
Eden, NC 27288  
336-623-9711

### **Tenor Health Partners Stokes, LLC**

Radha A Savitala, Founder

### **Stokes Medical Management Group, LLC**

Pamela P. Tillman, Chief Executive Officer  
Julie C. Farmer, Chief Operations Officer  
113 Gayle Drive  
King, NC 27021  
336-354-8143

Stokes County  
Request for Proposals  
(RFP) for Lease, Sale  
or Conveyance of  
Stokes Reynolds  
Memorial Hospital

Date: March 11, 2024

The Stokes County Board of Commissioners of Stokes County, North Carolina adopted a resolution declaring its intent to sell, lease or convey Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital. In accordance with the Resolution and the provisions of Part 1, Article 2, Chapter 131E of the NC General Statutes, the Board of Commissioners is required to solicit proposals for the sale, lease or conveyance of the Hospital. The purpose of this RFP is to invite organizations to submit a proposal. The County is under no obligation or responsibility to accept any proposal and reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

The hospital and related properties are currently leased to a lessee. The lessee has proposed to assign the current lease agreement to a new lessee. If you wish to be considered for an assignment of the current lease, a new lease, or sale; it will be necessary for you to enter into an agreement with the current lessee for the assignment of the lease and acquisition of the operating assets with provision for the payment or assumption of existing debt.

The current lease term expires July 31, 2026; subject to two five- year renewal options. Proposals should include your position on assuming the current lease or pursuing other options with respect to a new lease, sale or conveyance.

## **Hospital Facilities Description**

Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital (License #H0165) is a federally recognized Critical Access Hospital with three campus locations; Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital in Danbury, Dr. JR Jones Medical Center in King, and Rural Health Clinic in Pine Hall. These are described as follows:

Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital, Inc. ("SRMH")  
1570 NC 8 & 89 Hwy North  
P.O. Box 10  
Danbury, NC 27016

The SRMH campus in Danbury includes a full time Emergency Department with five treatment rooms and 53 licensed inpatient general acute care beds (25 of these beds are staffed) and 40 nursing facility beds that comprise the Stokes Reynolds Skilled Nursing Facility. This hospital campus location provides diagnostic imaging services including computed radiography. Surgical capacity at this location includes two licensed operating rooms for shared inpatient and ambulatory surgery. Ancillary services include laboratory, physical therapy, occupational therapy, and respiratory therapy. The Hospital

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King, NC 27021

Located in southwestern Stokes County, the Dr. J.R. Jones Medical Center is licensed as part of Stokes-Reynolds Memorial Hospital and includes ambulatory surgery, endoscopy and outpatient diagnostic services, including limited laboratory services. Surgical capacity at this location includes two licensed operating rooms for ambulatory surgery and a licensed dedicated endoscopy room. The Hospital partners with specialty physicians to provide orthopedics and ophthalmology. This location previously included emergency services. The Dr. J.R. Jones Medical Center totals 12,378 square feet.

Located in southeastern Stokes County, the Hospital operates rural health clinic services in leased space at the Pine Hall Community Center, 3853 US 311 Hwy N, Pine Hall, NC 27042. Diagnostic Imaging is available at this location.

## **Property, Facilities and Equipment**

The land, buildings and physical property owned by the hospital is described in the attached spread sheet "SRMH Statement of Values."

## **CON Applications**

According to hospital officials, there are no CON applications that are pending review or development.

## **Service Area Demographics**

The majority of inpatients and long-term care patients originate from Stokes County, making it the primary services area for Stokes-Reynolds Memorial Hospital. Ambulatory surgery patients who obtain service at Dr. J.R. Jones Medical Center reflect a mix of patients with most originating from Stokes and Forsyth County.

A high percentage of Stokes County inpatients and ambulatory patients are served by Novant Health and Atrium Wake Forest Baptist Health. While these facilities offer considerable depth of tertiary care in Winston-Salem, Stokes-Reynolds Hospital fulfills a vital role in providing access to Emergency Department, outpatient and inpatient care as well as nursing facility care to Stokes County residents within their home county.



## **Statutory Requirements:**

Pursuant to NCGS 131E-13, the County may lease, sell, or convey the hospital facilities to a corporation, foreign or domestic, authorized to do business in North Carolina, subject to the following conditions which shall be included in the lease, agreement of sale, or agreement of conveyance:

1. The corporation shall continue to provide the same or similar clinical hospital services to its patients in medical-surgery, obstetrics, pediatrics, out-patient and emergency treatment, including emergency services for the indigent, that the hospital facility provided prior to the lease, sale, or conveyance. These services may be terminated only as prescribed by Certificate of Need Law prescribed in Article 9 of Chapter 131E of the General Statutes, or, if Certificate of Need Law is inapplicable, by review procedure designed to guarantee public participation pursuant to rules adopted by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

2. The corporation shall ensure that indigent care is available to the population of the county or area served by the hospital authority at levels related to need, as previously demonstrated and determined mutually by the county or hospital authority and the corporation

3. The corporation shall not enact financial admission policies that have the effect of denying essential medical services or treatment solely because of a patient's immediate inability to pay for the services or treatment.

4. The corporation shall ensure that admission to and services of the facility are available to beneficiaries of governmental reimbursement programs (Medicaid/Medicare) without discrimination or preference because they are beneficiaries of those programs.

5. The corporation shall prepare an annual report that shows compliance with the requirements of the lease, sale, or conveyance.

The corporation shall further agree that if it fails to substantially comply with these conditions, or if it fails to operate the facility as a community general hospital open to the general public and free of discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, or national origin unless relieved of this responsibility by operation of law, or if the corporation dissolves without a successor corporation to carry out the terms and conditions of the lease, agreement of sale, or agreement of conveyance, all ownership or other rights in the hospital facility, including the building, land and equipment associated with the hospital, shall revert to the county or successor entity originally conveying the hospital; provided that any building, land, or equipment associated with the hospital facility that the corporation has constructed or acquired since the sale may

revert only upon payment to the corporation of a sum equal to the cost less depreciation of the building, land, or equipment.

### **Certifications Required for Proposal**

Each Proposer is required to propose a sale, lease, or other conveyance in the proposal submitted, and certify each of the following:

1. The proposer shall operate the hospital as a community general hospital open to the general public without discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex or national origin.
2. The proposer shall continue to provide the same or similar clinical hospital services in medical-surgery, pediatrics, outpatient and emergency treatment, including emergency services for indigent, that the hospital provided prior to the lease or sale of the hospital.
3. The proposer shall ensure that indigent care is available to the population of the area served by the hospital at levels related to need, as previously demonstrated and determined mutually by the County and the proposer.
4. The proposer shall ensure that admission to, and services of the hospital, are available to beneficiaries of governmental reimbursement programs without discrimination or preference because they are beneficiaries of such programs.
5. Neither proposer nor its affiliated companies has been indicted or convicted of any criminal offense that could result in exclusion of the proposer or an affiliate being excluded from Medicare, Medicaid or other federal healthcare programs.
6. Proposer and its affiliated companies have never been suspended or excluded from participation in Medicare, Medicaid or other Federal healthcare programs.
7. Proposer has adequate financial resources available to lease or purchase the hospital facilities and operate the hospital facilities, as documented by copies of the most recent audited financial statements or other supporting financial information which should be included with the proposal.
8. Proposer has full legal and/or corporate authority to submit its binding proposal, as evidenced by certified copy of board minutes, which should be included with the proposal.
9. Proposer shall certify whether it participates in any other managed care programs in which hospital is not currently participating; and whether proposer plans that the covered services under such new managed care plan will be offered to the leased facilities in Stokes County under such program.
10. Proposer shall certify whether it proposes operations on a for-profit or non-profit basis

## Instructions for Submitting Proposals

Proposer shall submit eight (8) hard copies and one electronic copy in PDF form of the proposals for sale, lease or conveyance, in an envelope clearly marked as "Hospital Proposal." Proposals must be received on or before 4:00 p.m. on **April 19, 2024**, by hand delivery, or otherwise physically delivered by public or private carriers or delivery services, including, but not limited to US Postal Service Certified Mail with return receipt requested, UPS "United Parcel Service" FEDEX "Federal Express or by any other delivery method with receipt of said proposals, to:

### Mailing Address

Stokes County

Attn: Amber Brown, Interim County Manager/Clerk to the Board

1014 Main Street

PO Box 20

Danbury, NC 27016

### Office Location

Stokes County

Attn: Amber Brown, Interim County Manager/Clerk to the Board

Ronald Reagan Building

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

1014 Main Street

Danbury, NC 27016

Requests for additional information must be submitted by **April 5, 2024**.

If desired, site visits will be coordinated and conducted by the Stokes County staff.

All proposals will be evaluated as submitted but the County reserves the right to request more information. Interviews will be conducted as needed. Although proposals will become a public document, they will be reviewed by the Commissioners in closed session, and will be made available to the public only when the County gives notice of a public hearing on the proposals.

Anticipated Date of Award is **May 13, 2024**.

## **Proposal Preparation Instructions**

Please provide the following information in your proposal:

1. Describe the organizational and ownership structure of the proposer. Include the full name of the company, its state of organization, the date of its organization, its mailing and street addresses, telephone number, email and the name of the person to contact. Please provide the same information for each subsidiary and affiliate of the company which is engaged in the operation of a hospital.
2. Provide names of the directors and principal officers of the proposer and each subsidiary, and a brief summary of the experience of each person in the healthcare industry. Also describe the management team that will be operating the hospital and provide a copy of their individual resumes. This description should also describe where these individuals will be geographically located as they perform their functions. An example would be the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and whether that person would be physically located at the hospital or elsewhere.
3. Describe the proposer / management team's number of years of operational experience operating licensed hospitals including critical access hospitals. Experience of the proposer's affiliates or predecessor companies may be submitted with explanation of relationship to proposer's current management team.
4. Provide copies of the audited financial statements of the proposer and each subsidiary (including all footnotes and auditor's letters) for the last three fiscal years and unaudited interim statements for the current period.
5. Please provide a copy of attorneys' letters regarding pending and threatened claims and investigations for the proposer and each subsidiary for each of the last three fiscal years.
6. Provide a statement as to whether or not the proposer, any subsidiary or any shareholder, officer or director of the proposer or any subsidiary has ever been suspended or excluded from or denied participation in any federal health care program, including without limitation Medicare, Medicaid and TRICARE. Please indicate whether there are any threatened or ongoing investigations relating to Medicare, Medicaid or TRICARE.
7. Provide a statement as to whether or not the licensure or accreditation of the proposer or any Subsidiary, or any hospital owned or operated by the proposer or any Subsidiary of the Company, has ever been suspended, revoked or denied.
8. Provide a listing of the insurance coverage maintained by the proposer and each Subsidiary, including without limitation, professional liability, general liability and officers

and directors coverage. Please include the name of each insurance company and provide the coverage limits and deductibles under each policy.

9. Provide a copy of the indigent care policies in effect at hospitals owned, operated, or managed by the proposer and any subsidiary.

10. Provide a copy of the most recent community benefit report or reports of the proposer and its subsidiaries.

11. Provide a complete list of services provided by the hospitals owned and operated by the proposer and its subsidiaries.

### **Matters to be Discussed in the Proposals**

Please discuss the following matters in your proposal:

1. How you propose to structure the transaction, including the amount you are willing to pay for the purchase or lease of the Hospital real estate and the purchase of the non-real estate Hospital assets.
2. Describe your vision for providing health care services in the Hospital's service area and strategy you plan to employ to implement any changes necessary to achieve the vision.
3. How you propose to grow the Hospital's inpatient and outpatient volumes.
4. Describe your plan to reduce patient outmigration.
5. Give examples of successful growth strategies that you have utilized.
6. Do you plan to make changes to the medical staff structure at the Hospital? If so, please describe your proposed changes.
7. Does the proposer or any of its subsidiaries operate a hospitalist program? If so, please describe the program.
8. Specifically describe the proposer's experience in physician recruitment and management of physician practices. What financial arrangements (income guarantees, loans, other financial assistance) does the proposer contemplate using when recruiting physicians?
9. Describe the proposer's policies and programs regarding access to care for indigent and uninsured patients, including your specific experience with providing indigent care.

10. Describe the commitment to help the Hospital access sufficient capital to address its facility, physician recruitment and other requirements for long-term financial stability and ability to support clinical excellence in the future.
11. Describe the information technology features the Company could offer to the Hospital. Include your plans to ensure an adequate electronic medical records (EMR) system for the hospital.
12. Your commitment to continued employment of current Hospital employees and continuation of equivalent benefits, including without limitation, retirement benefits.
13. Your commitment to work with the county government to plan, develop construct and license new critical access hospital facilities in Danbury and the City of King within five (5) years of taking over.
14. Your record of regulatory compliance in any previous operation or management of a critical access hospital and/or skilled nursing facility.
15. Your commitment to maintain appropriate amounts of insurance coverage including without limitation, professional liability coverage and “tail” coverage to protect the County after the lease or sale of the Hospital.
16. Provide information on how the lease, or sale of the Hospital to your organization will provide for the health-related needs of medically underserved groups such as low-income persons, racial and ethnic minorities, and handicapped persons.
17. Provide information on charges, services, and indigent care at similar facilities owned, operated, or managed by the proposer and its subsidiaries.
18. Provide information and examples of your commitment to support psychiatric and mental health services and coordination of care through the hospital emergency department. Please describe your experience regarding innovative methods for assessment and coordination of care or including telepsychiatry.
19. Describe your plan for operating the Stokes-Reynolds Skilled Nursing Facility component of the hospital.
20. Provide information and examples of your commitment to support Stokes County EMS and other county departments
21. Address requirements to obtain physician examination of employees with workers compensation injuries during and after normal business hours.

22. Address your commitment to support public health initiatives and partnering with the Stokes County Health Department.
23. Address your plan for marketing the hospital in Stokes and surrounding counties to increase patient numbers.
24. Address your plan for regular meetings and communications on the status of the hospital operations with the county commissioners. Also, include what your on-site local presence will look like to support daily operations of the hospital and its satellite facilities.
25. Address your plans for billing to ensure revenues are received in a manner to support operational cash flow requirements and cash reserve requirements.
26. Describe your prior experience in operating a critical access hospital. If the proposer has not operated a critical access hospital, please provide any additional information that should be considered by county decision makers on why they should take a chance on the company operating its first critical access hospital in Stokes County.
27. Describe how your policy or a proposed policy for determining whether or not a patient would qualify for charity care.
28. Describe your experience operating or performing other functions associated with skilled nursing facilities.

### **Evaluation Criteria for Proposals**

The following evaluation criteria will be used and points awarded from the total number of points assigned to each of the criteria.

1. Experience operating or performing other functions associated with critical access hospitals (25 points)
2. Financial assets available to successfully assume operation of the hospital without financial contribution by Stokes County Government. Economic feasibility of proposed transaction structure (25 points)
3. Experience operating or performing other functions associated with skilled nursing facilities (20 points)
4. Overall past performance of entity submitting proposal based on information provided in this proposal (15 points)
5. Unique qualifications of entity submitting proposal that might contribute to the success of the hospital (15 points)



Loc	Description	Address	City	State	Zip Code	Building
1	Hospital/Nursing Home	1570 NC 8 and 89 Hwy N,	Danbury	NC	27016	\$ 13,597,040
2	Engineering shop, Lawnmower building	1570 NC 8 and 89 Hwy N	Danbury	NC	27016	\$ 110,000
3	Storage Bld	1570 NC 8 and 89 Hwy N	Danbury	NC	27016	\$ 110,000
4	Building 200	1570 NC 8 and 89 Hwy N	Danbury	NC	27016	\$ 234,323
5	Pediatric Clinic	1030 Hospice Dr.	Danbury	NC	27016	\$ 141,570
6	Dr. J.R. Jones Medical Center	402 W. King Street	King	NC	27021	\$ 869,110
7	Pine Hall Clinic/Community Center	3853 US 311 Hwy N	Pine Hall	NC	27042	\$ -

Stokes County  
Request for Proposals  
(RFP) for Lease, Sale  
or Conveyance of  
Stokes Reynolds  
Memorial Hospital

Date: March 11, 2024

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## **Hospital Facilities Description**

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## **Property, Facilities and Equipment**

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4. The corporation shall ensure that admission to and services of the facility are available to beneficiaries of governmental reimbursement programs (Medicaid/Medicare) without discrimination or preference because they are beneficiaries of those programs.

5. The corporation shall prepare an annual report that shows compliance with the requirements of the lease, sale, or conveyance.

The corporation shall further agree that if it fails to substantially comply with these conditions, or if it fails to operate the facility as a community general hospital open to the general public and free of discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex, or national origin unless relieved of this responsibility by operation of law, or if the corporation dissolves without a successor corporation to carry out the terms and conditions of the lease, agreement of sale, or agreement of conveyance, all ownership or other rights in the hospital facility, including the building, land and equipment associated with the hospital, shall revert to the county or successor entity originally conveying the hospital; provided that any building, land, or equipment associated with the hospital facility that the corporation has constructed or acquired since the sale may

revert only upon payment to the corporation of a sum equal to the cost less depreciation of the building, land, or equipment.

### **Certifications Required for Proposal**

Each Proposer is required to propose a sale, lease, or other conveyance in the proposal submitted, and certify each of the following:

1. The proposer shall operate the hospital as a community general hospital open to the general public without discrimination based on race, creed, color, sex or national origin.
2. The proposer shall continue to provide the same or similar clinical hospital services in medical-surgery, pediatrics, outpatient and emergency treatment, including emergency services for indigent, that the hospital provided prior to the lease or sale of the hospital.
3. The proposer shall ensure that indigent care is available to the population of the area served by the hospital at levels related to need, as previously demonstrated and determined mutually by the County and the proposer.
4. The proposer shall ensure that admission to, and services of the hospital, are available to beneficiaries of governmental reimbursement programs without discrimination or preference because they are beneficiaries of such programs.
5. Neither proposer nor its affiliated companies has been indicted or convicted of any criminal offense that could result in exclusion of the proposer or an affiliate being excluded from Medicare, Medicaid or other federal healthcare programs.
6. Proposer and its affiliated companies have never been suspended or excluded from participation in Medicare, Medicaid or other Federal healthcare programs.
7. Proposer has adequate financial resources available to lease or purchase the hospital facilities and operate the hospital facilities, as documented by copies of the most recent audited financial statements or other supporting financial information which should be included with the proposal.
8. Proposer has full legal and/or corporate authority to submit its binding proposal, as evidenced by certified copy of board minutes or other documentation, which should be included with the proposal.
9. Proposer shall certify whether it participates in any other managed care programs in which hospital is not currently participating; and whether proposer plans that the covered services under such new managed care plan will be offered to the leased facilities in Stokes County under such program.
10. Proposer shall certify whether it proposes operations on a for-profit or non-profit basis

## Instructions for Submitting Proposals

Proposer shall submit eight (8) hard copies and one electronic copy in PDF form of the proposals for sale, lease or conveyance, in an envelope clearly marked as "Hospital Proposal." Proposals must be received on or before 4:00 p.m. on **April 19, 2024**, by hand delivery, or otherwise physically delivered by public or private carriers or delivery services, including, but not limited to US Postal Service Certified Mail with return receipt requested, UPS "United Parcel Service" FEDEX "Federal Express or by any other delivery method with receipt of said proposals, to:

### Mailing Address

Stokes County

Attn: Amber Brown, Interim County Manager/Clerk to the Board

1014 Main Street

PO Box 20

Danbury, NC 27016

### Office Location

Stokes County

Attn: Amber Brown, Interim County Manager/Clerk to the Board

Ronald Reagan Building

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor

1014 Main Street

Danbury, NC 27016

Requests for additional information must be submitted by **April 5, 2024**.

If desired, site visits will be coordinated and conducted by the Stokes County staff. Contact Glenda Pruitt, Purchasing/Project Manager at (336) 593-2452.

All proposals will be evaluated as submitted but the County reserves the right to request more information. Interviews will be conducted as needed. Although proposals will become a public document, they will be reviewed by the Commissioners in closed session, and will be made available to the public only when the County gives notice of a public hearing on the proposals.

Anticipated Date of Award is **May 13, 2024**.



## **Proposal Preparation Instructions**

Please provide the following information in your proposal:

1. Describe the organizational and ownership structure of the proposer. Include the full name of the company, its state of organization, the date of its organization, its mailing and street addresses, telephone number, email and the name of the person to contact. Please provide the same information for each subsidiary and affiliate of the company which is engaged in the operation of a hospital.
2. Provide names of the directors and principal officers of the proposer and each subsidiary, and a brief summary of the experience of each person in the healthcare industry. Also describe the management team that will be operating the hospital and provide a copy of their individual resumes. This description should also describe where these individuals will be geographically located as they perform their functions. An example would be the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and whether that person would be physically located at the hospital or elsewhere.
3. Describe the proposer / management team's number of years of operational experience operating licensed hospitals including critical access hospitals. Experience of the proposer's affiliates or predecessor companies may be submitted with explanation of relationship to proposer's current management team.
4. Provide copies of the audited financial statements of the proposer and each subsidiary (including all footnotes and auditor's letters) for the last three fiscal years and unaudited interim statements for the current period.
5. Please provide a copy of attorneys' letters regarding pending and threatened claims and investigations for the proposer and each subsidiary for each of the last three fiscal years.
6. Provide a statement as to whether or not the proposer, any subsidiary or any shareholder, officer or director of the proposer or any subsidiary has ever been suspended or excluded from or denied participation in any federal health care program, including without limitation Medicare, Medicaid and TRICARE. Please indicate whether there are any threatened or ongoing investigations relating to Medicare, Medicaid or TRICARE.
7. Provide a statement as to whether or not the licensure or accreditation of the proposer or any Subsidiary, or any hospital owned or operated by the proposer or any Subsidiary of the Company, has ever been suspended, revoked or denied.

8. Provide a listing of the insurance coverage maintained by the proposer and each Subsidiary, including without limitation, professional liability, general liability and officers and directors coverage. Please include the name of each insurance company and provide the coverage limits and deductibles under each policy.
9. Provide a copy of the indigent care policies in effect at hospitals owned, operated, or managed by the proposer and any subsidiary.
10. Provide a copy of the most recent community benefit report or reports of the proposer and its subsidiaries.
11. Provide a complete list of services provided by the hospitals owned and operated by the proposer and its subsidiaries.

### **Matters to be Discussed in the Proposals**

Please discuss the following matters in your proposal:

1. How you propose to structure the financial transaction of the purchase or lease of the Hospital.
2. Describe your vision for providing health care services in the Hospital's service area and strategy you plan to employ to implement any changes necessary to achieve the vision.
3. How you propose to grow the Hospital's inpatient and outpatient volumes.
4. Describe your plan to reduce patient outmigration.
5. Give examples of successful growth strategies that you have utilized.
6. Do you plan to make changes to the medical staff structure at the Hospital? If so, please describe your proposed changes.
7. Does the proposer or any of its subsidiaries operate a hospitalist program? If so, please describe the program.
8. Specifically describe the proposer's experience in physician recruitment and management of physician practices. What financial arrangements (income guarantees, loans, other financial assistance) does the proposer contemplate using when recruiting physicians?
9. Describe the proposer's policies and programs regarding access to care for indigent and uninsured patients, including your specific experience with providing indigent care.

10. Describe the commitment to help the Hospital access sufficient capital to address its facility, physician recruitment and other requirements for long-term financial stability and ability to support clinical excellence in the future.
11. Describe the information technology features the Company could offer to the Hospital. Include your plans to ensure an adequate electronic medical records (EMR) system for the hospital.
12. Your commitment to continued employment of current Hospital employees and continuation of equivalent benefits, including without limitation, retirement benefits.
13. Your commitment to work with the county government to plan, develop construct and license new critical access hospital facilities in Danbury and the City of King within five (5) years of taking over. Include the establishment of a 24 hour, seven days a week Emergency Room in the City of King.
14. Your record of regulatory compliance in any previous operation or management of a critical access hospital and/or skilled nursing facility.
15. Your commitment to maintain appropriate amounts of insurance coverage including without limitation, professional liability coverage and “tail” coverage to protect the County after the lease or sale of the Hospital.
16. Provide information on how the lease, or sale of the Hospital to your organization will provide for the health-related needs of medically underserved groups such as low-income persons, racial and ethnic minorities, and handicapped persons.
17. Provide information on charges, services, and indigent care at similar facilities owned, operated, or managed by the proposer and its subsidiaries.
18. Provide information and examples of your commitment to support psychiatric and mental health services and coordination of care through the hospital emergency department. Please describe your experience regarding innovative methods for assessment and coordination of care or including telepsychiatry.
19. Describe your plan for operating the Stokes-Reynolds Skilled Nursing Facility component of the hospital.
20. Provide information and examples of your commitment to support Stokes County EMS and other county departments
21. Address requirements to obtain physician examination of employees with workers compensation injuries during and after normal business hours.

22. Address your commitment to support public health initiatives and partnering with the Stokes County Health Department.
23. Address your plan for marketing the hospital in Stokes and surrounding counties to increase patient numbers.
24. Address your plan for regular meetings and communications on the status of the hospital operations with the county commissioners. Also, include what your on-site local presence will look like to support daily operations of the hospital and its satellite facilities.
25. Address your plans for billing to ensure revenues are received in a manner to support operational cash flow requirements and cash reserve requirements.
26. Describe your prior experience in operating a critical access hospital. If the proposer has not operated a critical access hospital, please provide any additional information that should be considered by county decision makers on why they should take a chance on the company operating its first critical access hospital in Stokes County.
27. Describe how your policy or a proposed policy for determining whether or not a patient would qualify for charity care.
28. Describe your experience operating or performing other functions associated with skilled nursing facilities.

### **Evaluation Criteria for Proposals**

The following evaluation criteria will be used and points awarded from the total number of points assigned to each of the criteria.

1. Experience operating or performing other functions associated with critical access hospitals (25 points)
2. Financial assets available to successfully assume operation of the hospital without financial contribution by Stokes County Government. Economic feasibility of proposed transaction structure (25 points)
3. Experience operating or performing other functions associated with skilled nursing facilities (20 points)
4. Overall past performance of entity submitting proposal based on information provided in this proposal (15 points)
5. Unique qualifications of entity submitting proposal that might contribute to the success of the hospital (15 points)