POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Public Hearings & Regular Meeting
June 16, 2025 - 5:00 PM
Bryant H. Womack Justice & Administration Building
40 Courthouse Street Columbus, NC 28722
MINUTES

Present: Chairman Yoder, Vice-Chairman Moore, Commissioner Beiler, Commissioner Melton, and Commissioner Hargett. Also in attendance were Manager Pittman, Attorney Berg, Clerk to the Board Freeman, media and citizens.

1. Public Hearing

   A. Call to Order the Public Hearing - The purpose of this public hearing is to take public comment on the proposed text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to allow the use of vacation rentals as a use in the permitted use table RE-5. (A copy of the current and proposed draft of the Zoning Ordinance is available for review online at https://www.polknc.gov/ordinances or in the County Manager's office.)

      Chelsea Louray, Planning Administrator gave a presentation, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes.

   B. Citizen Comments

   There were 9 citizen comments.

   C. Adjourn Public Hearing

   Vice-Chairman Moore moved to adjourn the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Public Hearing

   A. Call to Order the Public Hearing - The purpose of the Public Hearing is to take public comment on the proposed new road names; Walnut Cove - Private Road – Off of Old Highway 19, and Strawberry Hill Lane - Private Road - Off of Substation Road. The Public Hearing was properly advertised in the Tryon Daily Bulletin.

   B. Citizen Comments

   There were no citizen comments.

   C. Adjourn Public Hearing

   Commissioner Melton moved to adjourn the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Call to Order the Regular Meeting - Chairman Yoder.

4. Invocation - Chairman Yoder.

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5. Pledge of Allegiance - Commissioner Melton.

6. Approval of Agenda

   A. Items may be added or removed at this time.

   Manager Pittman requested that the Cashflow Loan Agreement (Round 2) be added to the regular meeting agenda as item D.I.

   Attorney Berg requested that an item be added as attorney - client privilege to the closed session agenda.

   Commissioner Melton moved to approve the addition of both items to the regular meeting, and closed session agendas, seconded by Commissioner Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.

7. Consent Agenda

   Commissioner Melton moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Vice-Chairman Moore, and the motion carried unanimously.

   A. Approval of May 19, 2025, Budget Work Session, May 19, 2025, Regular, and June 2, 2025, Public Hearing Meeting Minutes.

   B. Juvenile Crime and Prevention Council (JCPC) Annual Plan and Budget for FY 2025/2026.

   C. 2025 Recruitment and Retention Resolution.

   D. Schedule a Public Hearing for proposed new road names to be considered on Monday, July 21, 2025, at 5:00 pm in the Bryant H. Womack, Justice and Administration Building, 40 Courthouse Street, Columbus.

   E. GF - Opioid/McKinsey Payment - Budget Amendment for $17,728.

   F. ETSF - Fund 60 - Budget Amendment of $136,698 for the uninterruptible power source (UPS) purchase.

   G. Sheriff, School Resource Officers, and Jail Budget Transfers - Budget Amendment of $108,108.

8. Citizen Comments on Agenda Items

   There were no citizen comments.

9. Regular Agenda Items

   A. Budget Amendments - Sandra Hughes will present any budget amendments that may need approval for FY 2024/25.

   Mrs. Hughes said that there were no additional budget amendments that needed approval.

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B. Polk County Budget Ordinance for the Fiscal Year 2025/26 (including any proposed fee changes included in the County Manager's recommended budget) - The Manager's recommended budget was presented on May 12, 2025. A budget work session was held on May 19, 2025, and the budget public hearing was held on June 2, 2025.

Manager Pittman requested that an additional $20,000 be allocated to the 911 Communications contracted services and to increase the General Fund Balance Appropriation to offset that increase. He also announced a reduction in the tax rate, which dropped from 0.4342 to a rate of 0.4277.

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to approve the FY 2025/2026 Budget Ordinance with the additional $20,000 allocated to the 911 Communications Contracted Services, and the increase in fund balance appropriation, seconded by Commissioner Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

C. Reappointment of the County Tax Administrator for a four-year term.

Commissioner Melton moved to approve Melissa O'Loughlin's reappointment as the County Tax Administrator for another four-year term, seconded by Vice-Chairman Moore, and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Amendment to Loan Agreement between North Carolina and Polk County (previously approved at the 3/17/25 BOC meeting) - Manager Pittman

Commissioner Melton moved to approve the amendment to the loan agreement, seconded by Commissioner Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.

D.I. State Cashflow Loans for Disaster Response Activities to Local Governments (Round 2) - Manager Pittman, and Sandra Hughes.

Mrs. Hughes explained that this cashflow loan is similar to the one that was approved at the March 17, 2025 Regular Meeting. She said that this is an additional interest free loan in the amount of $1,092,017.52 that will go toward the completion of projects that are being completed due to Hurricane Helene.

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to approve the State Cashflow Loans for Disaster Response Activities to Local Governments (Round 2), seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

E. FEMA Grant Project Ordinance - Sandra Hughes

Commissioner Hargett moved to approve the FEMA Hurricane Helene Disaster Response and Recovery Grant Project Ordinance, seconded by Commissioner Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

F. Duke Energy Easement Along Landfill Road - Manager Pittman.

Manager Pittman requested approval and signatory authority for the Duke Energy Easement.

Commissioner Melton moved to approve the Duke Energy Landfill Road Easement and grant Manager Pittman signatory authority, seconded by Vice-Chairman Moore, and the motion carried unanimously.

G. Consideration and Approval of the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance,

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subsequent to the Public Hearing - Cathy Ruth, Planning Director.

Chelsea Louray was present for questions.

Commissioner Hargett asked for clarification on whether the Hunting Country Association is a homeowner's association (HOA).

Mrs. Louray, explained that it is not. Individuals can choose to join the association and pay dues, but it is not a requirement even if they live within the area covered by the association.

The commissioners determined that the proposed land use, to permit short-term rental units in the RE5 zoning district, is consistent with the comprehensive land use plan.

Commissioner Melton moved to deny the proposed zoning ordinance text amendment to allow short term rental units as a permitted use in the RE-5 zoning district, seconded by Vice-Chairman Moore. The motion carried with a 4 to 1 vote, Commissioner Hargett opposing.

H. Consideration and Approval of the proposed new road names subsequent to the Public Hearing - Attorney, Jana Berg.

Attorney Berg was present for questions.

Commissioner Hargett moved to approve Walnut Cove as presented, seconded by Commissioner Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to approve Strawberry Hill Lane as presented, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

10. Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items.

There was one citizen comment.

11. Volunteer Board Applications

A. Columbus Fire District Tax Commission - There are three vacancies and two applicants; Gordon High, and Sam Patel.

Commissioner Melton moved to appoint the applicants as presented to the Columbus Fire District Tax Commission, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Mill Spring Fire District Tax Commission - There are three vacancies, and three applicants; John McDowell, Ric Osborn, and Jeff Reid.

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to appoint the applicants as presented to the Mill Spring Fire District Tax Commission, seconded by Commissioner Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

12. Commissioner Comments.

The Commissioners collectively thanked everyone in attendance.

13. Closed Session

A. Motion to go into closed session for the purpose of personnel.

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to go into closed session for the purpose of personnel and attorney-client privilege, seconded by Commissioner Melton, and the motion carried

unanimously

B. Motion to return to open session.

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to return to open session, seconded by Commissioner Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Moore moved for the County Attorney to retain outside council for tower litigation, seconded by Jennifer Hargett, and the motion carried unanimously.

14. Adjournment

Vice-Chairman Moore moved to adjourn the regular meeting, seconded by Commissioner Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.

Attest:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Kennedy E Freeman
Clerk to the Board

Myron Yoder
Chairman

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