

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Meeting
December 4, 2023 - 3:00 PM
R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice - Womack Building
Columbus, NC
MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Melton, Vice-Chairman Yoder, Commissioner Beiler, Commissioner Moore, and Commissioner Overholt. Also in attendance were County Manager Pittman, County Attorney Berg, Clerk to the Board Tipton, media, and citizens.

1. Polk County Employee Recognition Awards - Board of Commissioners, Manager Pittman, and Tommy Oakman, Human Resources Officer.

Commissioners, Manager Pittman and Tommy Oakman, Human Resources Officer distributed awards to the employees.

2. Public Hearing

A. Call to Order the Public Hearing - Chairman Melton. The purpose of the public hearing was to take comments on the proposed new road names Copper Fox Lane, Steam Shovel Pike, Iron Avenue, Gold Bend, Copper Way, and Lead Fork. The public hearing was properly advertised in the Tryon Daily Bulletin.

B. Citizen Comments.

There were none.

C. Commissioner Comments.

There were none.

D. Adjourn Public Hearing.

Commissioner Beiler moved to adjourn the Public Hearing, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

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

4. Invocation - Commissioner Moore.

Commissioner Moore introduced Dr. Paul Brintley to give the invocation. Dr. Brintley is an ambassador for the NC Faith and Freedom Coalition, author, pastor, and current candidate for NC House District 11.

5. Pledge of Allegiance - Vice-Chairman Yoder.

6. Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

A. Election of Chairman - Attorney Berg.

Chairman Melton expressed appreciation to each member of the Board, and thanked them for his time serving as Chairman.

Attorney Berg opened the floor for nominations.

Commissioner Melton nominated Commissener Yoder as Chairman and there were no other nominations.

Commissioner Melton motioned to close the nominations.

Attorney Berg requested all those in favor of Commissioner Yoder as Chairman to say aye, Commissioner Moore abstained, the nomination passed 5-0.

B. Election of Vice-Chairman - Attorney Berg.

Attorney Berg opened the floor for nominations of Vice Chairman..

Commissioner Beiler nominated Commissener Melton as Vice Chairman and there were no other nominations.

Commissioner Yoder motioned to close the nominations.

Attorney Berg requested all those in favor of Commissioner Melton as Vice Chairman to say aye, Commissioner Moore abstained, the nomination passed 5-0.

7. Approval of Agenda (New Chairman Presides).

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

Vice Chairman Melton motioned to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Commissioner Overholt, and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Consent Agenda - Motion to approve Consent Agenda.

A. Approval of November 20, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes.

B. Annual Examination and approval of Public Official Bonds as required by § 58-72-20. (Bonds are available for review in the County Managers Office.)

C. Tax Refund Request in the amount of \$106.54.

Commissioner Moore motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Overholt, and the motion carried unanimously.

9. Citizen Comments on Agenda Items.

There was one citizen comment on agenda items.

10. NC License Plate Agency Top Performance Award - Melissa O'Loughlin, Tax Administrator.

Melissa O'Loughlin, Tax Administrator, said the Department of Motor Vehicles extended their contract by two years to 2025 and stated the License Plate Agency is in good standing.

She then announced the county License Plate Agency received the Top Performance Award for FY 22'-23' for their tier. The agency scored 100% with no errors on their audit for the entire fiscal year.

11. Polk County 2023 Annual Financial Report - Kari Dunlap, Martin Starnes & Associates PA.

Kari Dunlap from Martin Starnes & Associates PA presented the annual financial information and said there were no findings in the audit. She said there was one red flag which was only due to the tax bill abatement for Tryon International Equestrian Center. A copy of the presentation is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes.

12. St. Luke's Hospital Update - Michelle Fortune, Chief Executive Officer.

Vice-Chairman Melton asked that this item be added to the agenda. Ms. Fortune gave a presentation detailing the updates at St. Luke's Hospital over the past year and the importance/impact of having St. Luke's Hospital in our county. She also announced the new interim Chief Executive Officer will be Alex Bell, as her last day will be December 31, 2023. A copy of the presentation is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes.

13. Polk County Website - Bruce Yelton, Polk County IT Director.

Bruce Yelton, IT Director announced the Polk County website has been updated and the new site is scheduled to go live early January 2024. He gave an overview of the changes and said county staff will begin training on the new website this month.

14. Housing Assistance Property Easement Discussion - Cathy Ruth, Planning and Economic Development Director and Housing Assistance Representative.

Cathy Ruth, Planning and Economic Development Director and Susan Frady, a representative from Housing Assistance explained the easement relocation will still grant the county a right of way to adjoining county property through the Housing Assistance property. Ms. Frady also said she will come back to the Board at a future date, to request that we accept the donation of the remaining lands from the Housing Assistance Property which will adjoin the existing county property.

Commissioner Moore motioned to approve the easement relocation as requested and to grant the County Manager signatory authority for the Termination of Easement and Deed of Easement, seconded by Vice Chairman Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

15. New Polk County Road Names - Copper Fox Lane (off SR1004), Steam Shovel Pike (off SR1138), Iron Avenue (off SR1138), Gold Bend (off

SR1138), Copper Way (SR1138), and Lead Fork (off SR1138) - Attorney Berg.

Commissioner Overholt motioned to approve the road names as presented, seconded by Vice Chairman Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

16. United States Geological Survey, U.S. Board on Geographic Names, Creek Naming - Manager Pittman.

Manager Pittman presented the information regarding the proposed creek naming. The consensus of the Board was to take no action and allow USGS full control of the naming process.

17. PCHS Lady Volleyball Road Sign Discussion - Manager Pittman.

Manager Pittman and Cathy Ruth presented a draft sign. They said the plan is in the very early stages and it must be permitted and engineered by NCDOT in addition to the cost of the signs, which will be significant. Manager Pittman said the bottom part of the sign, which recognizes Wolverine Volleyball State Champions, will be on a three year cycle and will have to be removed, as required by NCDOT.

18. Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items.

There were none.

19. Chairman and Commissioner Comments.

The Commissioners each thanked those in attendance and wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Commissioner Moore read the following prepared statement and asked that it be included in the minutes verbatim:

My fellow commissioners it's been an honor to serve with each of you these past five years. We have accomplished a lot for our County by communicating and working together. With that being said I'm appalled at how all you all came up with the plan for Chair and Vice Chair tonight. I've spoken to each of you and asked for you all to give me the opportunity to serve as Vice Chair. My five years on this board prove my leadership skills. And I quote one commissioner, he said we have a plan but obviously I was never asked(told) about the plan. That's apparent here tonight.

20. Adjournment

Commissioner Overholt motioned to adjourn, seconded by Vice Chairman Melton, and the motion carried unanimously.

Attest:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS

Kristy A Tipton
Clerk to the Board

Tommy W. Melton
Chairman