

Meeting of the Hoke County Board of Commissioners on Monday, April 4, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Room of the Pratt Building.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

James Leach, Chairman  
 Harry Southerland, Vice Chairman  
 Robert Wright  
 Tony Hunt  
 Allen Thomas

OTHERS PRESENT:

Letitia Edens, County Manager  
 Grady Hunt, County Attorney  
 Gwen McGougan, Clerk to the Board

Chairman Leach called the meeting to order with a quorum present and welcomed everyone.

Chairman Leach gave the invocation, and Commissioner Wright led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ITEM 1. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

**Motion: Commissioner Wright made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Hunt.**

**Action: The motion was carried, 5-0.**

ITEM 2. CONSENT AGENDA

- a. Minutes from March 21, 2016 meeting
- b. Information Technology – Purchase Agreement for telephone systems at Pratt Bldg. and Jail (reviewed by County Attorney)
- c. NCVTS Report
- d. Finance – Budget Amendments
  1. DMV
  2. Public Utilities

**Motion: Commissioner Wright made a motion to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Commissioner Hunt.**

**Action: The motion was unanimously carried.**

ITEM 3. SENIOR SERVICES ADVISORY BOARD APPOINTMENTS-  
 Mary Hollingsworth

The following persons were appointed to the Hoke County Senior Services Advisory Board:

Tammy Chaney, Adult Supervisor at Hoke County Department of Social Services, replacing Bobby Allen (deceased),

John McCraney, Member, Mount Pisgah Congregant Nutrition Site, replacing Margaret Lennon (no longer employed at Lumber River Council of Governments),

Shirley Smith, Family and Consumer Science Agent with NC Cooperative Extension, replacing Keith Walters who is no longer employed by Hoke County, and

Kelly Ray, Marketing & Program Representative at Open Arms Retirement Center, replacing Joyce Blackburn (deceased).

**Motion: Commissioner Thomas made a motion to approve the appointment of Tammy Chaney, John McCraney, Shirley Smith and Kelly Ray to the Senior Services Advisory Board, seconded by Commissioner Wright.**

**Action: The motion was unanimously carried.**

#### ITEM 4. MANAGER'S REPORT

Mrs. Edens began her report by referencing that audits of the Senior Services programs from prior years have revealed several issues with the Nutrition sites and the Home Health Care programs. However, the most recent audit of the Senior Services programs showed all aspects were where they should be and they had an excellent audit. Mrs. Edens commended the Senior Services Director, Mary Hollingsworth, and her staff. Both Chairman Leach and Commissioner Wright congratulated Mrs. Hollingsworth and thanked her for her hard work.

#### ITEM 5. PUBLIC INPUT

Mrs. Dawn Bennett introduced herself to the Board. Mrs. Bennett works in the Courthouse as the Juvenile Clerk. She is hosting an event, a Father-Daughter Dance, to promote and sustain the father-daughter relationship and unify families among the citizens of Hoke County. The dance will take place at the Community Resource Center (formerly Rouse Center). Mrs. Bennett is putting this event together on her own and is seeking sponsorship and donations. Chairman Leach said that the Board cannot use taxpayer dollars toward the event, but he volunteered himself and the other members of the Board to personally make donations to the event.

Mr. Carl Daniels appeared before the Board to discuss the Private Roads Committee. He would like to see the program proceed. Vice Chairman Southerland responded that the County has received pricing information for some of the road repairs and he and the Board expect the program to continue once the Board hires a Utilities Director.

Mr. Billy Brunson appeared before the Board to discuss Tylertown Fire Department. They are requesting the County's assistance in restoring the building and trucks in order to get the fire department back up and running separately from North Raeford Fire Department. Vice Chairman Southerland confirmed that Mr. Brunson had contacted the County requesting information on how the taxpayer funds for the fire department are being spent. The County Manager stated that the County can provide information on the amount of tax funds collected and disbursed to the fire departments, but the County cannot control how the money is spent once disbursed. Commissioner Thomas suggested that Mr. Brunson file a public records request with the fire chief of North Raeford Fire Department. Commissioner Wright suggested that Mr. Brunson ask for a copy of the fire department's audit. Mr. Brunson replied that he had attempted to obtain that information by sending a request via certified mail and the letter had been returned to him. Commissioner Hunt proposed that the Manager request a copy of the audit. Commissioner Hunt then asked Mr. Brunson how many certified firemen live within the Tylertown district. Mr. Brunson said that he knew of at least nine. Commissioner Wright stated that at the time North Raeford Fire Department took over Tylertown was allocated about \$28,000 per year. Currently, those funds would amount to around \$40,000 per year. That would not be enough to equip firemen and maintain buildings and trucks. Tylertown is at a disadvantage because the tax base is so low. An industry or large business would help. Commissioner Wright continued by saying that an examination of Tylertown's records would show that the fire department had made only interest payments on their trucks. It would help if they could get some grant money.

Mrs. C. S. Porter asked to address the Board.

**Motion: Commissioner Hunt made a motion to extend the Public Hearing to allow Mrs. Porter to speak, seconded by Chairman Leach.**

**Action: The motion was unanimously carried.**

Mrs. Porter began by telling the Board that if it is grants that they need, they can get grants. She said that Chief Baker had said in a community meeting that when the community could sustain it, North Raeford would give Tylertown their fire department back. He'd been advised by his board not to spend any money on the Tylertown station. Mrs. Porter said that around the time of the merge, Freddy Johnson had assisted them in obtaining a \$117,000 grant. The community just wants to know what it will take to get the fire department back. Commissioner Thomas stated that Freddy Johnson had met with individuals from the State about two weeks ago and they're requesting maps and demographic information. Freddy Johnson will be sending this information in to the State. After the State has all the information they need, they will come and meet with the community. Commissioner Wright told Mrs. Porter and the other attendees representing Tylertown Fire Department that their fire insurance rating is currently a Class 6. Upon reopening the Tylertown Fire Department they will automatically go to a Class 10 for a couple of years. This will drastically increase the homeowner's insurance premiums for the residents. Firefighter training will be required to bring those premiums back down. Commissioner Wright continued by saying that the ownership of the land and building is in question and the best place for them to start is by getting the title straightened out. Also, the County might be interested in putting a

community building there and that building could possibly also serve as a fire department. Vice Chairman Southerland reminded Mrs. Porter that the County supports Tylertown Fire Department. Mrs. Porter thanked the Board for allowing her to speak.

Mr. Billy Brunson returned to address the Board. He said that the community has no control over the state's audit. Nor do they have any control over the condition of the building. Tylertown firefighters also joined the North Raeford fire department and were voted off. There is taxpayer money coming in but they are not allowed to use it, even to buy a can of paint to paint the building. He does not consider the fire department building safe to use for community functions. All of Tylertown's gear was turned over to North Raeford at the time of the merge. Mr. Brunson reiterated that they just want to get the building and trucks up to par so that the Tylertown Fire Department can be functional.

#### ITEM 6. CLOSED SESSION

**Motion: Commissioner Thomas made a motion to go into closed session for the purpose of discussing personnel, North Carolina General Statutes §153A-98 & §143-318.11(a)(1)&(6), seconded by Commissioner Hunt.**

**Action: The motion was unanimously carried.**

No action was taken during the closed session.

**Motion: Commissioner Hunt made a motion to come out of closed session and go back into regular session, seconded by Commissioner Thomas.**

**Action: The motion was unanimously carried.**

**Motion: Vice Chairman Southerland made a motion offer the position of Utilities Director to Mr. Hilton Villines, seconded by Commissioner Thomas.**

**Action: The motion was unanimously carried.**

#### ITEM 13. ADJOURN

Chairman Leach thanked everyone for coming.

There being no further business to come before the Hoke County Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Hunt made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Wright. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

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James A. Leach, Chairman

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Gwendolyn McGougan, Clerk to the Board