

MINUTES – APRIL 9, 2012

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in special session at the Historic Courthouse in Yanceyville, North Carolina at 5:00 p.m. on Monday, April 9, 2012. Members of Commissioners present: Nathaniel Hall, Chairman, Cathy W. Lucas, Vice-Chair, Gordon G. Satterfield, William E. Carter, and Jeremiah Jefferies. Absent: Kenneth D. Travis and N. Kent Williamson. Also present: Senator Rick Gunn, Kevin B. Howard, County Manager. Paula P. Seamster, Clerk to the Board, recorded the minutes.

2012 COUNTY GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY MEETING WITH LEGISLATORS

Chairman Hall opened the meeting with a Moment of Silent Prayer.

Chairman Hall asked all the Commissioners, County Manager and Clerk to the Board to introduce themselves to Senator Rick Gunn.

Chairman Hall stated “We certainly do appreciate you taking the time to come out and to listen to our concerns. We have two or three items we received from the Association that we will cover. We don’t want to bombard you with these three items but we certainly want to enforce some of them. We want to focus on some specific things that are affecting Caswell County. I am sure by now you are familiar with the demographics of Caswell County. Sometimes our needs are a little bit different from some of the other counties. With that said we will hear introductory comments from you.”

Senator Rick Gunn thanked the Board for inviting him. He stated that a lot had happened since the last time he visited with the County Commissioners which was about a year ago. Senator Gunn stated that the Senate did not want to put anymore taxes on anyone in North Carolina including the gas tax and sales tax. He also stated that he knew that government agencies were watching their expenses. He talked about the challenges that the Senate and the House would be facing during their Session in May. Senator Gunn also talked about the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and their involvement with the legislature. Senator Gunn informed the commissioners on what committees he was on now and touched on them briefly. He stated that Medicaid was the most difficult thing that was being faced now. Senator Gunn told the commissioners that he would not be representing Caswell County after December, that the lines that been redrawn but he also stated that he would never part ties with Caswell.

Commissioner Satterfield stated that he thought the most important thing that the Association had sent in was that of authorizing county broadband, both public and private partnerships. He continued by saying that 85% of Caswell has broadband but is too slow. He gave an example of a download that would have taken 3 hours at his house but when he took a friend to Duke Hospital it only took 12 minutes. Commissioner Satterfield told Senator Gunn that Caswell County was missing out on people moving here as well as business because the county could not offer them high speed internet service. He stated that Caswell County has to sell itself because the tobacco buy-out money would end next year and there is not a lot to sell in Caswell County except for raw land. Senator Gunn responded that this was on the ‘radar’. Commissioner

Satterfield added that there is a fiber optic line being run from the mountains to the coast and that Caswell County residents should be able to tie into that line.

Chairman Hall stated the second issue would be the increase of county lottery funds and restoring mental health funding. Chairman Hall continued by saying that Caswell County has no direct mental health services now. What is being offered now to the mental health patients is one day a week and he stated that their health could not be restricted to one day per week. Chairman Hall informed Senator Gunn that Caswell County was joining PBH but it is a slow process. Senator Gunn asked how the services were before the merger. Chairman Hall responded that it had gotten worse. He explained that the County had more providers before the merger. Commissioner Lucas added that Caswell County lost their rehab program. Senator Gunn asked if the mental health services were ever good. Chairman Hall responded that it was good two or three years ago and added that it was not because of the merger but because of the new regulations. Senator Gunn stated that mental health is the most complicated, comprehensive challenge the state government has to deal with. Senator Gunn asked the commissioners if they had specific questions about mental health to email them to him.

Mr. Howard stated that he had a concern about the representation of PBH to Caswell County. He continued by saying that each county would have 3 representatives which meant that there would be 45 representatives and that would be too many. It was his understanding that PBH was going to take that number and reduce it to choose a committee to represent all the counties. Mr. Howard felt that Caswell County would be left out. Senator Gunn responded by saying that PBH has had a lot of success and that they have a successful operating model. Chairman Hall stated that he did not knock the model but he did not want Caswell to be left out.

Commissioner Carter asked if there would be in cuts in the budget. Senator Gunn responded that he had not heard of any specifically but Medicaid was going to be a challenge. Commissioner Satterfield asked how much flexibility they had. Senator Gunn responded not a lot. Commissioner Satterfield stated that the Health Board had started looking at duplicate programs to see which ones could be cut out. He added that the state had started restricting how the money could be spent at the Health Department. Commissioner Satterfield continued by saying there is not as much flexibility anymore with moving funds from one program to another. Senator Gunn asked if anyone was aware of the Community Care Board. No one was. Senator Gunn stated that he would send some information about the Community Care Board to the commissioners.

Commissioner Jefferies brought up that Social Services was having to change their software and that it was going to cost the county a lot of money to do that. Senator Gunn asked if that had been pushed down from the state to the county. Mr. Howard responded that he was not sure because he had not met with the Social Services Director on her budget yet.

Commissioner Jefferies asked about the bridge on Yarborough's Mill Road and when it would be repaired. Senator Gunn responded that this had been a big political issue. He stated that the state could not continue to raise the gas tax. The gas tax is what pays for the repairs to the bridges and roads. He added that there is supposed to be 9 bridges in Caswell County repaired and he added that 29 bridges in Alamance were going to be repaired. Chairman Hall stated that he knew there were a lot of bridges in North Carolina that needed to be repaired but he wanted to know how

many of them were one lane bridges like the bridges in Caswell County. Senator Gunn responded by saying 9 bridges in Caswell County were on the list to be repaired and he hoped that Yarboroughs Mill Road was one of them. Chairman Hall continued by saying Caswell County does not have any interstates going through it but he wondered how much money was spent on the Bryan Parkway. Senator Gunn responded that the system had been revamped in the way it is being handled now. He added that North Carolina has some of the finest roads that lead nowhere. Senator Gunn stated that North Carolina now has an equitable formula to make sure that every county is looked at.

Commissioner Satterfield asked about getting Caswell County a Driver's License office that is open more than half a day once a month. Senator Gunn responded that he has addressed this before and that he would address it again. Commissioner Satterfield asked why it was not possible to do it online if it is not possible to have an office. Commissioner Carter stated that he was told by someone in Roxboro that Caswell County could get a mobile unit to issue driver's licenses. Senator Gunn told him that he was exactly right and asked that an email to be sent to him to remind him so he could get this to the proper powers to be.

Commissioner Satterfield then asked about the Internet Sweepstakes and why the county could not tax them. Senator Gunn responded by saying they are asking to be taxed.

Commissioner Lucas asked if Senator Gunn was aware of the water issues, river withdrawal issues. Senator Gunn asked about specifics. Commissioner Lucas continued with reclassifications. She asked about the current status. Senator Gunn responded that he had not seen any of that. Commissioner Lucas asked who that would go through. Commissioner Carter responded DENR.

Chairman Hall asked about the status of fracturing. Senator Gunn responded by saying that he thought that this was going to be reintroduced and that the bill should have passed before. He said that it passed in the Senate and the House but the Governor vetoed it. The Governor has changed her mind and DENR has changed their mind on fracking. The bill passed in South Carolina and Virginia and that North Carolina was in the middle. He added that fracking could add 10,000 jobs to the state. If this is reintroduced Senator Gunn thought it could pass.

Chairman Hall stated that the last item on the Association's list is to allow Human Services Administrative flexibility. He continued by saying he knew that two counties now have the authority to do certain things. Chairman Hall stated that all counties should be allowed to do this. He continued by saying that he knew the Senate passed this but the House did not. Commissioner Satterfield stated the reason the House did not pass it was because it would eliminate administrative positions.

Chairman Hall stated again the most pressing issue with Caswell County is broadband. He added that with the technology today that he felt like someone needed to do something about this.

Chairman Hall thanked Senator Gunn for his time.

ADJOURNMENT

At 6:40 p.m. Chairman Hall adjourned the meeting.

Paula P. Seamster
Clerk to the Board

Nathaniel Hall
Chairman
