

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEMBERS PRESENT

August 19, 2024
OTHERS PRESENT

Jeremiah Jefferies, Chair
John Dickerson
Ethel Gwynn
Rick McVey
Frank Rose
Tim Yarbrough

Scott Meszaros, County Manager
Melissa Williamson, Deputy County Manager
Russell Johnston, County Attorney
Carla Smith, Clerk to the Board

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Caswell, North Carolina, met in a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, August 19, 2024 at 6:30 pm at the Historic Courthouse.

WELCOME:

Chairman Jefferies called the meeting to order, and welcomed everyone to the Caswell County Board of Commissioners meeting on August 19, 2024. Then all paused for a moment of Silent Prayer, and the Board of Commissioners and all the guest in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

There were no public comments.

RECOGNITIONS:

Commissioner Rose: Some of the ones in the audience tonight or are watching online may not have realize that we had a partial Statewide 911 outage Saturday. It affected not only Caswell, but a bunch of counties throughout the state. I just want to give recognition and a big thank you to our 911 Director and our 911 Personnel. They came in, and they made sure that we had a secure line in with Rockingham County to receive the calls, as well as all of our Fire Departments. They manned the Fire Departments until that line could get established, which would cut out, you know, if we had a call come in due to that delay, response time would not be delayed. So I just want to thank everybody on that.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A **motion** was made by Commissioner McVey and seconded by Commissioner Yarbrough and **carried unanimously** to approve the agenda. (Ayes: Commissioners McVey, Yarbrough, Rose, Dickerson, Gwynn, and Jefferies)

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. August 5, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes
- b. FY 22 Audit Contract Amendment
- c. FY 24 Fund Balance Commitment for Excess Inspection Revenues

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A **motion** was made by Commissioner Dickerson and seconded by Commissioner Gwynn and **carried unanimously** to approve the consent agenda. (Ayes: Commissioners McVey, Yarbrough, Rose, Dickerson, Gwynn, and Jefferies)

PRESENTATION:

FY 2022 AUDIT:

Alan Thompson, County Auditor, said good evening. If you'd be kind enough to flip over to page one under that significant audit findings, there should be three different paragraphs talking about appropriate accounting policies, financial statements prepared by management, the accounting estimates that are in there, and then depreciation allowance for doubtful accounts. We were all good with those items. On page two, we talked about the financial statement disclosures. We were good with that. No difficulties encountered in performing the audit other than what I'll talk about in just a moment. No uncorrected misstatements, no disagreements with management, and management did provide us with a representation letter dated July 23rd. We're unaware that management consulted any outside accountants, auditors, etc. Then under findings and issues, a few months ago I think I presented the June 30, 21 and most of these, if not all of these, are the same type findings. So if I brush through that I'm happy to stop and slow down, but for the most part these are repeats of what I talked about at that meeting. The delay in the audit report, we're all aware of that. Various key processes were not completed timely. The changes in or turnover in staff positions creates challenges. On page three, the EMS receivables balance as well as the allowance need to be reviewed regularly. Efforts should be made to ensure that all negative fund balances are cleared up and projects have been completed or closed on the general ledger. We got to review the depreciation schedule, but transfers between funds are recorded. The county has one outstanding loan associated with a revolving loan fund, and that's in arrears. We need to make sure we're on top of that. Prior period adjustments were recorded for missed postings in prior years, adopting a budget when several new funds did not make the budget amendments, and adequate documentation was not obtained throughout the year to substantiate all the transactions recorded. Two departments (the Register of Deeds and Inspections/Planning) were noted for not complying with the daily deposit general statutes, which is \$500. Board approval was not obtained for tax releases and refunds, and that was 2022-008. Then the county did not pay their monthly LGERS contributions timely. Then please be aware that GASB 98 or 96, I'm sorry, is coming for the June 30, 23. That's talking about subscription based... My mind went blank on me. Subscription based like software. If you buy or you have a big software project that you're going to be paying for over a period of time, you have to capitalize that, and then put an associated debt on it. It's similar to the lease standard where if you have a long-term lease, you have to record the lease, and then a corresponding debt associated with it. It's more of an accounting issue than it is anything else. If you were running a private business, you'd expense those amounts, but according the GASB standards, they want you to capitalize those amounts. On page five, despite all the other issues, there are some really good news in the numbers themselves. I don't say these are all the key numbers in the report, but these are definitely some

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of the key numbers in the report that you want to look at and make sure you know where they are. So the top number there, the total fund balance in your general fund is at \$14, 942,000. If you go all the way back to 18, that number is 7,018,000. So during that five-year period, the General Fund fund balance is more than doubled, which is very healthy. Unavailable fund balance 3,649,000. Restricted is 7,792,000. General fund expenditures including transfers out less new debt is 24,622,000, and fund balance available as a percentage is 45.8%. If you go back to 18 that figure is 19.46%. Then unassigned fund balance is 7,150,000. The unassigned fund balance as a percentage is 29.04%. These percentages are important in the sense that if you ever go to the LGC State Treasurer meeting for debt issuance, they're going to look at these two numbers or these two percentages to see where you are. That's why we put them in there. And you see revenues over and under expenditures before transfers. You had 1,504,000 in your general fund. That minus 7,744,000 in other governmental is because you have projects going on and that could be simply the timing of when you receive the revenue versus when the expenditures were made. Cash in the general fund is 13,313,000. If you go back to 18 that number is 5,976,000. Other governmental 1,418,000. Cash in transportation is 514,987. Your General Fund fund balance again is 14.9 million. Fund balance in other governmental is 2.5. Your net position in Solid Waste is a minus 143,000. Net position in transportation is a positive 952,000. You see your property tax rates there, collection percentage, which is the highest of any of the five years shown for the current year, and then collection percentage excluding Motor Vehicles. You see your property valuation: the levy amounts and then your debt. You can see where your debt did jump up over that 5-year period because of some new issues, and then the breakdown of your General Fund Revenue by department and expenditures by department. The total general fund revenues being 28.6 million, and total revenue, I mean expenditures, being 27.1. If you'd be kind enough to flip over to page six, on the blue bar there you see the nice trend in total fund balance. Restricted fund balance is also increasing. On the bottom, you see your analysis of fund balance available going from 19.46 up to 45.87. Then on page seven, you see your unassigned fund balance as a percentage going from 13.5 up to 29.04%, and then revenues over and under expenses before transfers on the bottom. You see your general fund having a nice chart there where all five years are positive. On page eight, you see your cash balances at the top and fund balances at the top in pie charts, and underneath that, you see total cash balances being 15.2 million and total fund balances being 18.3 million. On page nine you see your property tax rates there compared with your group weighted average, and then the collection percentages compared to your group weighted average as well. And by the cash balances, fund balances, and collection percentage, there's some positive things in these numbers. So even though you're behind on your audits, there's some issues, etc., the numbers themselves have some very positive numbers or positive trends. On page 10 you can see your debt analysis there. Most of it's in that Bond Anticipation Note of 13.1 million. On the bottom you see your breakdown of your general fund revenue in a pie chart with ad valorem taxes making up 45.19%. Your other taxes, permits, etc. being 24.98%, and intergovernmental revenue being 16.17%. On page 11 you see Public

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Safety, Human Services, General government, and education being the main percentages of expenditures.

If you've been on the Board for a period of time, then you remember the LGC used to send out what they call unit letters. This, page 12, 13, and 14 replaces that unit letter. The LGC won't send those out. They send us some templates etc. so that we can relay their information or what they want us to say to you. Then you have 60 days from tonight's meeting to respond to that. You see reconciliation of records, deficit fund balances, and prior period adjustments there. Budget violations on page 13 and another budget violation for the late submission of audit, retention of records, internal controls, lack of Board approval on the tax releases and refunds, the daily deposits, and lack of internal controls around payroll. All of those items have to be responded to which are very similar to the previous one we talked about a few months ago. If you use a similar letter, you should be okay. I think Johnna is probably going to talk to you about where we are on 6/30/23. I think we've done some significant work in terms of some of our testing, but there's some work to be done to get a good trial balance in order to move forward on that. So hopefully we can make that happen as quickly as possible. I'm happy to answer any questions, not just tonight, but anytime you have questions. You read through the audit report, you look at the presentation summary, and you've got questions on anything, you're always welcome to call the office. If I happen not to be there, tell him to give you my cell number. I'll do my best to get you an answer to your question.

Chairman Jefferies asked if any Board members had any questions.

Commissioner Dickerson said what was the major holdup in getting this accomplished? It's been a long time coming. We were told different reasons that things had drug along. What was your finding on that? Mr. Thompson said well we got the trial balance. I think... I have to look back on the date. So as soon as we got the trial balance, we had a pretty quick turnaround. Just like right now, we've done the testing we're able to do, but we really can't start on the 6/30/23 until we can get there. So one of the big holdups is, as mentioned in the findings, the bank recs weren't complete. Several other things weren't reconciled back to the general ledger, and we have some restrictions on us in terms of we can't actually do that for you. So until we get a trial balance that the bank's reconciliation actually ties to it, we're kind of stuck waiting on somebody to do that and give that to us before we can actually do our work. Commissioner Dickerson said well where do you as the auditor lay the blame for the information not being reported properly where it took so long for all this to take place? You're waiting on prior year numbers. This problem's been going back a long time. What created it in layman's terms so this Board can understand. We see what you have here. We see what you're saying, but break it down. Who was responsible for the debacle that started all of this in motion? Mr. Thompson said ultimately the finance officer is responsible for what's going on here. That area, whether it's one person or the department, the finance officer who signs off on all that is the one who's responsible. Commissioner Dickerson said well thank you for your candor. I appreciate that.

Chairman Jefferies asked if there was anyone else.

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Commissioner Rose said Mr. Jefferies. One thing and I think this is pretty much addressed to you. There's one thing I would like to see going forward. I know we've been in this process for a while, and I'm hoping it's going to be cleared up here pretty quick. So you're waiting on the 23 stuff before you can get started. Mr. Thompson said well we've done all the or most of the work that we're able to do to this point until we get a good trial balance. Yes, sir. So we're kind of in a holding pattern if you will. Commissioner Rose said and you're saying that's dependent upon us. Mr. Thompson said yes sir. Commissioner Rose said okay. One thing I would like to see Mr. Manager is once we do get through this process, I think this Board needs to get a quarterly year-to-date report on expenditures. At least then we can have something to look at, especially if we got departments that are going over budget. At least we can see that there's a problem coming. Now it may be something totally out of their control. I understand that, but at least this Board will have an idea of where we stand, you know, midway through this budget process or cycle so we don't run into this again as soon as we can get it finished up. Thank you. I appreciate all you've done. Mr. Thompson said technically there is a statute that ask the Finance Officer to present that to you as a Board quarterly. Commissioner Rose said okay. Mr. Thompson said so that that is definitely something that you should be getting. Commissioner Rose said thank you. Chairman Jefferies said thank you, and Mr. Thompson said yes sir. I appreciate it.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

VAYA HEALTH UPDATE:

Cara Dohner said good evening everyone. Sorry I didn't hear my name being called. I'm Cara Dohner. I am the Community Relations Director from Vaya Health. For those of you who don't know, Vaya is one of the five state Managed Care Organizations. We manage Medicaid for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, substance use disorders, and also foster care. As you can imagine, it's a pretty busy space right now in the state of our world. So right now the state has decided that we need to have whole person care. So Vaya has been providing mental health services for over 50 years, and to give you an example, so a Blue Cross Blue Shield and United, those are called standard plans. They have typically provided just mental or excuse me, just physical health services. So what's been happening with the state is they have decided that our organizations should also be providing physical health services, and a Blue Cross Blue Shield and United Healthcare should be also providing mental health services. So everyone has whole person care. They don't have to go to different providers or all over the place. They can be seen by one organization. So what that means is that Vaya will still be caring for the most acute patients. So people with bipolar disorders and people on the Innovations Waiver. I'll talk about in a second. Then Blue Cross will be helping people who have anxiety, ADHD, and things that are a little less severe, but that's important to know. Not everyone will qualify for the Vaya side of Medicaid, but now that United is also providing mental health services, there are a lot of extra services that people don't know exist. So if anyone is interested, I can provide those resources to the county, but there are things like child car seats, Weight

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Watchers, tutoring for kids. People have a choice of what plan they pick. So I just wanted to mention that.

Tonight I'm going to go over some of the statistics for Caswell County on how you're performing and the kind of people who are utilizing our services. So you can see this is our Innovations Waiver. So if someone has an intellectual or developmental disability, they can apply for the Innovations Waiver. What that is is care up to \$120,000 a year, which is amazing because if someone is in a facility, the state is probably paying triple that amount of money for care that's probably not as good because there is a lot of abuse that occurs in some facilities. So really we're trying to change that trend and bring people out of facilities and into more private settings. So for example, if a family has a child with a disability, it can take up to a decade or more to get on this waiver. The state consistently adds more members to it for each County, but this graph shows you right now how many people are on the Innovations Waiver. So I think that says 23 on the left in the orange, and on the right side it says 19. So those are the number of people waiting to get on the Innovations Waiver. There are many services that they can get while they wait like help with workforce requirements. Different facilities offer programs that can help while they wait, but that's a pretty neat program that we have in the state. You go to the next slide. So right here you can see the active members that we serve in Care Management. Care Management is someone that assists a member and make sure they have kind of wraparound services, and they have everything they need to be receiving the right care. So you can see that the orange is for children, and the blue is for adults. So those are the people that are being served. Down on the bottom you see IDD, that's Individuals with Developmental Disabilities, and Mental Health is MH. You can go to the next slide. This is a busy slide. I'm not going to read it to you, but you can see the hospital admissions. You can see the readmits are in orange, and the blue are just the single admits. So you can see those are pretty low numbers. That's good. Then that's for mental health on the left, and substance use on the right. You can go to the next slide. Here you can see the hospitals that surround Caswell County. You can see the admits there, and the rapid readmits in the last 30 days. Those numbers are pretty low as well. You can go the next. Here's Community Hospitals for Alamance Regional. These are non-Medicaid people who do not have Medicaid. So that could be state funded care and anyone like if someone's driving through Caswell County and they don't have Medicaid. They could fall into that bucket of people being served. You can see the community hospital inpatient use for adults at the different providers across the county or close to the county. These aren't in the county. This is the same slide for children, and these are Emergency Department admissions and readmissions. So the rapid response number was pretty big right there on the left for readmits. So there's a lot going on in the behavioral health space. I just presented in Rockingham County, which is close to you, this week about safety in schools, and we have a lot of issues. So last year in this country, 1500 teachers were assaulted by students. So there's a lot going on unfortunately with cell phones in classrooms and social media pressures. So we're trying to help families and parents on the front end deal with some of these issues because there's a lot of need in the behavioral health space in

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schools. So we work quite a bit with the schools in this County. We have a good relationship with the Health Collaborative here. I know a lot of us at Vaya attend a lot of their meetings, but I did want to let you know that we have a class going on this week in Caswell County. Two classes actually. It's called Question Persuade and Refer, and we call it QPR. It's for suicide prevention, and I will tell you those numbers are raising rapidly. We even see suicides in elementary age children. So anybody is welcome to attend this. It's on the 22nd. There are two classes. One is 8:30 to 11:30, and breakfast will be served there. The other class is 12:30 to 3:30, and lunch will be served there. That's open to any Community member and any school staff, and that will be at the Yanceyville Municipal Building. So that's just an announcement I have. Does anyone have any questions?

Commissioner Gwynn said I want to ask one. I think I heard you mention a wait list early on in your presentation. How do they get off the wait list? How long is the waiting list and are they on the waiting list? Mrs. Dohner said it's long. It could be, I think right now, the longest is or could be up to 12 years. So a lot of people don't know it exists, this program. The Innovations Waiver, just to give you an example, so I know a lady who has used it in Chatham County. Her son has autism, but it's on a scale where he could live independently. So he was in a lot of homes that were abusive, and she got him on the waiver. Now he lives in a tiny house on his own. He has Care Management staff come in all day long to make sure he's taking his medicine. He can make his own meals that he prepares himself. He has notes all over the place, but he lives a great life. It's safe; he's happy. So I would encourage the county, you know we could maybe put something on the County website to let people know this program exists because it helps family members assist their children or a sibling. But the challenge is getting on the list. So are there any other questions? Chairman Jefferies said thank you. Mrs. Dohner said thank you so much for having me.

BROADBAND UPDATE:

Justin DeLancey, Senior Manager from Charter Communications, said good evening everyone. Commissioners, how are you all doing this evening? So again good times to be given an update. It's all positive news in the county, which are the updates that I typically like to give. We're going to do just sort of a quick rundown. I think it's going to be helpful because Caswell County has had so many different grants kind of parceled out over the last two years or three years. I think it'll be easy to just do a quick rundown on the grants that you've gotten, kind of where they are in the county, what the progress is, and then have a quick conversation about what's coming up on the horizon or what's ahead. If at any time you guys have any questions, please don't hesitate to break in and ask. So that sort of quick road map. You guys have been incredibly aggressive in going after grants. Of all the counties that I represent in the state, you all have been incredibly fortunate at receiving a lot of grants. You were smart about having some money set aside to be able to use as matching funds so that you could be competitive and go after grants. The first grant that we had was a Federal Grant. It's called the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF). It was a reverse auction, where providers sort of bid with the federal government and

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kind of bid for unclaimed census block groups. I'll be honest with you; the mapping wasn't that great back then. This bidding was all done in around 2019. There was very spotty mapping. It was done at a census block level, and if one house was served in a census block, it made that entire census block ineligible to be bid on. So you missed a lot of homes, but as you'll see in a little bit, there was wide coverage across the county on what was bid on. So I think you guys came out much better than a lot of other counties through that RDOF process. Then we're talking the GREAT Grant. It's a state-run grant. The Growing Rural Economies through Advanced Technology Grant. Again it's a state funded grant using ARPA funds. They went through two rounds of funding through the GREAT Grant process. They had about \$400 million set aside, and they've almost exhausted that \$400 million going out to the counties. The CAB Grant was another \$400 million pot of money. They've gone through an initial round of funding of which you guys were awarded a grant, and then we're going to talk about kind of some ways that the state's trying to be creative about drawing down the rest of those funds. Then we'll talk about going forward. If you want to go ahead. So this is a map of RDOF. It was the largest grant. It covered around 3600 homes in the county. This build has been completed. So as you can see, it is a very large swath of the county that's wiped out. Every house within those blue areas, barring some minute circumstances that could prevent a house from being served, but by and large 99% of the houses within those blue blocks are served and have service right now. So we're very happy with that. We're happy with the progress that we made. It took us a little over two years from start to finish before we could finish that, but it was complete. We initially said, I think when I spoke with you in February that was initially kind of said, we had finished up at that point. We did reopen construction. There were a few houses that called in, and said hey we should be in the area that we missed. We kind of went back out and took care of them, but we believe that we're done at this point.

The next map that I think we've already gone to is the GREAT Grant. So we, Charter Communications, did not win an initial GREAT Grant in the county. That grant went to another provider, and we'll talk about that here in a little bit. But we were fortunate enough to win a second round award, and that was for about 606 homes. As you can see it's primarily focused in that sort of southwest corner of the county, but there are pockets here and there that kind of get you some good coverage. Construction of that is ongoing. We've completed a little over a hundred of those homes to this point. There have been some other kind of addresses thrown in, and we'll talk about that in a few minutes. That have kind of prolonged that process. But we're in the process of building that, and we're going to keep right on through until we get done. I don't foresee any hiccups in that construction.

Next we have our CAB Grant. As you can see, it is primarily focused in the northern half of the county. And again all of these grants were designed for providers to come in and fill in the gaps that were left over from RDOF and left over from where other providers had previously served. So if it looks a little jumbled, it's because we're filling in gaps every time there's a grant round. This CAB grant funding was for 589 houses. That contract, I believe, has just been executed

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within the past couple of months, and that's a two-year build time. I anticipate that we'll be building that CAB grant as we're coming through and finishing the GREAT grant that we just spoke about and the next GREAT Grant. So I anticipate that it'll be finished up before that two-year deadline substantially, but we do have two years to build it.

Then finally we have another round of GREAT grant. This is actually what we picked up from a provider that defaulted. So I mentioned to you before that we were not successful in winning a first round of the GREAT grant; we won a second round. The provider that won the first round had to default on their obligation. The state opened up some of those passings to be able to be taken by us, and we were aggressive in going after those. That particular tranche was about 249 addresses. I know I'm throwing a lot of numbers at you, but I want to do it to get to this next slide. This is the overall picture of where we're at and what has been awarded to this point. Total, we're looking at a little over 5,000 homes that have been connected by grants in the past, we'll call it, three years really of construction. So incredibly aggressive construction, and as you can see, you've gotten some really impressive coverage in the county. Now as I'm sure you guys know, you have incumbent providers in the county. You've got Comcast that primarily covers Yanceyville and areas straight up in a line kind of to the north. Then you have some legacy Brightspeed as well as legacy Spectrum already in the county. So when you add all those pieces in to what's already there, you are looking at about 95% coverage. I mean it's very impressive what Caswell County and your staff have been able to do over the past three years through these grants. So I think that deserves a round of applause or pat on the back. You guys have done a great job. I do have a number slide for you just because I do like having the numbers there for you. It goes over everything that I presented to this point. Again that sort of baseline number of 5,062 homes is a really impressive count.

Going forward, we do have pretty exhaustive coverage in the county. So I don't know how many opportunities are out there left. How many individuals may not have coverage? I'm sure that there are in fact some homeowners that are not covered by these grants. There are opportunities for those individuals to get service through grants. The state has recently announced a Stop Gap program. It's about \$86 million in funds that the counties can go after. Stop Gap was initially envisioned as those sort of onesie twosie addresses here and there that were either very long driveways or they were stuck in the middle of existing networks that were unserved that providers were unwilling to go into existing networks and go get. This program was initially designed for that. A good portion of the funds will still be eligible for that, but the state's also added in a little wrinkle that says counties can go after funds to use as matches for additional CAB grants. So even though you guys have already won a CAB grant and spent matching funds, you can go after additional funds that the state has and use that to kind of plus up and go after even more CAB dollars. Then we have BEAD. If anything is left over after Stop Gap, the state is getting \$1.5 billion dollar from the feds for broadband expansion and deployment. That's going to be divvied out amongst the counties as well. So there are still options going forward. We certainly stand at the ready to help aid in any deployment that we can. I'm sure you guys have

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questions. I know I kind of ran through that really quick, but I do want to get to any questions because those can often get in the weeds and take a while.

Chairman Jefferies asked are there any questions from the Board.

Commissioner Yarborough said Jason, could you back up about two slides? Go on back another one. The map. Okay, right there. Justin I'm looking at your map, and even though you've got those blue sections that were in RDOF highlighted, there are additional homes that are covered that are not covered by that blue territory? Am I correct? Mr. DeLancey said yes. So I'm going to do my best here to kind of describe... I don't want to go away from the mic. So all along the edges of those blue shaded areas you have what are called synergy passings. So homes that you know a CBG that was covered by RDOF maybe on the left side of the road; well if there's a home on the right side of the road, we're still going to give it service. Additionally, you may have roads, dead end roads or small roads that shoot off, that are adjacent to CBGs that were in the RDOF program. We also went and covered those as well. So you are getting some additional coverage. You have a fair percentage on the boundaries of those CBGs that were also served through RDOF and that we claim to serve. That's why you don't see in some places more dots adjacent because those were picked up during RDOF. Commissioner Yarbrough said can you tell us what percentage of homeowners actually signed up with your company? I know it was available. Yes, but how many took the next step to sign up? Mr. DeLancey said I can't. Unfortunately, that's something that we typically don't share. What I can tell you though is it is a significant percentage. I'll say we'll go with a little less than half. Roundabout. So I mean keep in mind there's a lot of factors that go into a take rate when people come by. Obviously cost, which we make every effort. We have several low-income plans to try and allow for individuals in low income or different situations to be able to afford our products. The other thing too is there are a lot of vacation homes in the area. There are a lot of secondary homes in the area that individuals may not have any need or interest for service at those residents. So that gets factored into the take rate, but we're very pleased with what we've seen in the take rate in Caswell, and we think it's right in line with everywhere else.

Chairman Jefferies said anyone else.

Commissioner Dickerson said what percentage of the homes now have coverage, if they want it? Do you have any number of breakdown as to what we have available countywide? Mr. DeLancey said so I will be honest with you, and I think that is where we're kind of always hitting a moving target. The maps always get better. As we go out and have people in the field doing walkouts, our internal numbers get stronger. The state is constantly doing surveys coming up with new data points to where they their data gets stronger. I will tell you that when we went after the latest round of CAB grants, the 589 homes that we bid for and won was all that we saw that was out there that did not have service. So based upon what we could see at that present time when we were doing our designs, we tried to go for everything. Now that's not to say that... We only know what we can see. There may be things that we didn't see, but I think that you're

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getting down into the lower numbers at this point. You are only having the ones and twos, the homes that have mile long driveways, three quarter mile long driveways, the homes that are on private drives that are very lengthy and long to get to, and then homes that are right in the middle of areas that are served by legacy service providers. I certainly don't want to speak for the industry. And I'm not necessarily speaking for Charter, but just if you think about, it's a tough business proposition for anyone to go into a competitor's territory, try and do business, and connect homes because the take rate is going to be a little bit lower and things are going to be tougher to just break into market wise. So I think that the only ones that you have left are going to be just... All the low hanging fruit is gone; so it's going to be the very hardest stuff to get to.

Chairman Jefferies said anyone else. Thank you. Mr. DeLancey said absolutely, and I'll be here and happy to answer anyone's specific questions as we go on throughout the night.

ACTION ITEMS:

RECLASSIFICATION OF FINANCE DIRECTOR POSITION:

County Manager Meszaros said so I'm going to have Johnna come up. She helped to or she actually did the work on this and drafted this. Would you rather sit up here Johnna? So we wanted to wait till the 2022 audit was completed to get the Finance Director reclassified and posted out there. It's really hard to get somebody to come, but I'll have her talk about that. Johnna Sharpe said I'll just go up to the podium. County Manager Meszaros said okay. Thank you.

Johnna Sharpe said good evening Commissioners. As you know, the Finance Officer position is currently vacant, and as also Mr. Thompson answered your question, the Finance Officer is ultimately responsible for all the financial operations of the county. It is extremely important to get a well-qualified, experienced person in order to move the county forward and to set up better processes and procedures to ensure your records are kept timely. Finance Officers are a very difficult group to recruit right now. Some of your neighbors are currently or have been recruiting for people for Finance Officer positions, and it's taken them a couple of times to get qualified people. So for you to be in the best position to recruit for this, it's important to set a salary range, and what we're recommending is to reclassify the Finance Officer position to a Chief Financial Officer, which shows the full breadth of that experience because they are overseeing all the financial transactions of the county. They also have the statutory authority that if transactions are not being performed correctly, they can stop it. And quite frankly some of the things that we are changing now in the department is things where previously items that weren't budgeted or where there was no budget, expenditures were made. That's some of why you see some of the budget violations. So there's a lot of supervision of the other departments in your county. In looking at your pay bands, the highest that you could put this position is at a pay band 81, which the salary range would be \$71,447 to \$105,470, and even at that range, I think you will have difficulty attracting qualified applicants. The county has a \$40 million budget. It is not a small entity. The complexities are huge. The requirements are large. It is a tremendous level of responsibility and requires a tremendous amount of knowledge and experience to do it well. Given the constraints

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of your current pay bands, this is the highest band below the County Manager. So that's why we are recommending that this position be reclassified to give you the best opportunity to get a qualified individual to take over the leadership of the Finance Office. Scott, I don't know if you want to add anything.

County Manager Meszaros said I do know that Person County, I met with their manager last Saturday. She was at the conference. They reposted theirs with a higher salary because they went through a first round, and they're just keeping it open. Rockingham did just hire somebody. I don't think you want to hear the of numbers that those other... There's not a lot of market for qualified Finance people in the nation to be honest. I had a position in Alaska that was open two years, and it paid \$40 to 60,000 more than the City Manager pay that I was getting. And I got no qualified applicants. So I think this is a budget, a classification, and this is where under normal circumstances we would put that position. I think that gives me the... We do have the budget authority because of vacancies. We do have the ability to pay. My guess is that the starting pay for this is going to be at or above the maximum range, which I can't go above your maximum. If you go on like the municipalities or the County Association websites, they have postings there for Finance Directors currently open across the state. Person County is in good financial condition, they have things run pretty tight, and they're paying up to \$157,000. I'm not saying it's going to take that kind of money to get somebody here qualified, but I would say there's a lot of small cities, which is a fifth the complexity of a county, and they're paying in the 130s to 150s for those types of positions. You could find a job if you're a finance person. I would say that Johnna has been here for a long time with us, and some weeks she works 60 plus hours a week for this entity, which is applauded. She really has kind of lifted this, but we need somebody that's going to be competent and correct a lot of the deficiencies and problems we've had. If we don't have that, it's not good to pay the accounting firms and the auditors and to have to put that burden on the staff because it's going to cost a lot more than paying somebody competent.

Johnna Sharpe said well and I want to just mention, this is almost some cost avoidance on your part. There have been several areas where had the eyes not been able to identify some of the things that needed to be completed and know how to do them, you could have lost hundreds of thousands of dollars. So it may seem, I know this is a wide salary range and it's a challenge to think you've got to pay someone this, but investing in the right or being able to afford the right qualifications is going to save you much more money down the road because you do have a lot of funds at risk when they're not stayed on top of and not aggressively managed.

Commissioner Rose said a couple questions I've got. So if changing this from a Finance Director to Chief Finance Officer, and I didn't see it in here. What other responsibilities will be added to that position, if any? Mrs. Sharpe said I think it's showing just the whole breadth. It's not... Their job is not just running the Finance Department. Their job is running the finances of the county, and so I think there's a lot more involved in working with the departments to ensure they're managing their dollars appropriately. I think there's a lot to be done with your purchasing policies that could save the county money. So currently there are functions that you all aren't

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performing that needed to be added under this role. Commissioner Rose said it looks like it's about an \$8,477 difference in the minimum versus what you're looking at going to. Was anything looked at as far as this position requiring a certified accounting degree? Mrs. Sharpe said oh I think the position will require a four-year degree. Absolutely. Preferably in accounting. Commissioner Rose said now when you said four-year degree, now you can get a four-year degree in something totally... Mrs. Sharp said no a four-year degree in business, accounting, management, or financial analysis. That's what you've got to be looking for. You've got to find and the fundamental accounting is important. Accounting is all based on debits and credits. If you don't have those straight, and quite frankly those haven't been straight. You can't properly account for your transactions. So a fundamental knowledge of accounting is of utmost importance. County Manager Meszaros said and I would add that's fund accounting. Not like you could have a CPA and be an expert financial person, but if you don't have municipal government fund accounting knowledge, it's not really apples to apples. Mrs. Sharpe said fund accounting would be helpful, but I'm talking about the basic bookkeeping. Knowing that expenses are recorded as debits, and revenues are recorded as credits. It's the basics in some instances that are causing some of the challenges. Commissioner Rose said one other question, and I do not see it in here. So forgive me for asking. Under the position as it is listed now is there an accounting degree required under that position? Mrs. Sharpe said I'm not sure. I don't have that off the top of my head. Commissioner Rose said but this Chief Financial Officer position will have that? Mrs. Sharpe said yes, and I don't know that it requires a CPA. You don't have to be a CPA to know how to do really good accounting. So while that might be a plus, that designation increases your cost significantly. Because I'll just tell you for comparative, starting right out of college out of getting your accounting degree, students right out of college are making \$50 to 70,000 with no experience. Commissioner Rose said that would be my next question. How much experience do you think this position, we should look at? With what we have been facing in the past, what would be your recommendation? Mrs. Sharpe said I think you need somewhere in the six to eight years of experience of either being a Finance Officer in a similarly sized entity or being an Assistant Finance Officer of maybe even a larger entity where the person's ready to step into the director role. But they've got to have experience in large complex organizations. They need to have had responsibility for millions and millions of dollars, and they need to have a track record of on time audits, timely reporting, and really understanding like I said those basic fundamentals of what it takes to post transactions properly and close out a month. So that if you're doing a regular monthly close by the end of the year, it's not difficult to do the audit, but if you're not staying on top of things every month, it becomes quite a challenge. Commissioner Rose said thank you.

Commissioner Dickerson said has this job been advertised at a lower rate, or has it not been put out there at all yet? Mrs. Sharpe said it hasn't been put out there at all yet. We were waiting to get this get this reclassification done. Commissioner Dickerson said so we haven't tried to see if we can attract somebody at the rate we currently have rather than start out at the upper tier? Mrs.

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Sharpe said that's correct. I mean if you want to do that, that's your pleasure. But I think even at the lower tier, I mean even at this range, I think it's going to be a challenge. I hope I'm wrong, but it's going to be a challenge.

Commissioner Yarbrough said what's the range now for a Finance Director? Mrs. Sharpe said it's \$62,970 to \$92,955. Commissioner Yarbrough said and you recommended it to go to what for CFO? Mrs. Sharpe said \$71,447 to \$105,470.

Commissioner Rose said would there be a period of time before that \$105,470. I mean you're just kind of working up to that. Correct? Mrs. Sharpe said maybe. Commissioner Yarbrough said or they could be hired at that rate? Mrs. Sharpe said well I think that's what...If we advertise that that's the range, people who want more than that aren't going to apply. County Manager Meszaros said yes, a lot of places put their ads out and don't say what they pay to try to see what qualified applicants would negotiate. I don't think we would be surprised knowing what the market is, but I think if you put the specific salary in this market, I don't think you're going to get a lot of qualified applicants. But you never know. Mrs. Sharpe said well I think it's important to manage expectations. You don't want to just put dependent on qualifications because you might have people who are expecting \$150,000. So if the Board's not willing to pay that, I feel it's disingenuous to not advertise the range in which you're willing to pay. County Manager Meszaros said I mean I don't know. Some of the bigger counties paying the 300s for these position. Mrs. Sharpe said yes, but this isn't a big county. But it's still... \$40 million is not a small budget with over 20 funds and also 350 employees. It's quite a large entity that has significant statutory requirements in how the operations and processes are supposed to be handled. It's the findings that the Auditors reported on which is where things aren't being handled according to those standards and requirements.

Chairman Jefferies said do you think staff shortage could play a part in this by not having enough staff? Mrs. Sharpe said possibly and I think it's less of a staffing issue. I think some of the reason why waiting not advertising this immediately was at least having your 22 audit done. You're in a better position for candidates who are looking at you. 23 is well underway way. I'll update you a little bit on that shortly. But I think you've got one or two positions in the department. One we're looking to go ahead and start advertising now because I think the best way to say this is kind of we've been in a real crisis mode. There were some huge deadlines that were forcing us to try and get that 22 audit done. Some of the system constraints, and we had to hit those hard deadlines, which was why there was so much push on 22. But we've improved a lot of processes. We've got a lot of things moving in the right direction for 25. So I think we're to the point now that you could bring on an additional staff person, and it be more manageable than where we were six months ago. We've got these better processes so we can start them off on the right foot. So it's taken a while to really get to the point where bringing in new staff wouldn't almost cause more harm than good.

Chairman Jefferies asked if there was anyone else.

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Commissioner Gwynn said I want to ask did you say starting salary was \$71,000 or around that? Or just not knowing the job market and what's out there, do you think there's somebody nearby that would be interested with that type of background? Mrs. Sharp said yes. We won't know until we put it out there. Maybe. You never know what someone's circumstances are, but we want to be positioned or we want to put the county in the best position going out of the gate to try and within the current constraints of your current paying classification plan be as attractive as we can be.

Commissioner Yarbrough said I would like to see something detailed as far as the responsibilities, duties, and qualifications of the CFO compared to the current Finance Director position. Just what the difference is. What authority the CFO has that the current Finance Director position doesn't have? County Manager Meszaros said we have the job descriptions. I didn't bring them up tonight. Commissioner Yarbrough said well I'm not talking so much about job description Scott. As my understanding maybe I'm reading between the lines and I shouldn't be, the CFO will have much, much more authority than the Finance Director does. And I want to know what that authority is, and what the implications may be far as the county goes. Mrs. Sharpe said I don't know that the authority will be that much more. I think it's more having that positional authority in the organization to where if a department head isn't doing the right thing, that position has the positional authority to say I'm sorry you can't do this because of a, b, and c. That sometimes when you're up here, that can be somewhat challenging because the responsibilities are pretty clear set in the statute, but it's just how those are carried out within an organization. But even if we kept the job description exactly the same, I still think you've got to have this salary range to attract it.

Commissioner Rose said one last question. These other numbers that you have on here, surrounding counties and counties with populations close to ours, are those Finance Officer salaries, or is that Chief Financial Officer salaries? Mrs. Sharpe said in the survey, it just lists Finance Officer. Commissioner Rose said okay. So those are Finance Officers. Mrs. Sharpe said yes, which could be the CFO because they don't distinguish. That title varies from county to county. For example, Rockingham still is a Finance Director, and Person's is a Chief Financial Officer. Commissioner Rose said okay. Thank you.

Mrs. Sharpe said yes, and so these bench marks looked at within the region, looking at the population range, then looking at counties with a similar taxable property per capita, and that also might be Agricultural. You can see in that scenario in the taxable property per capita in the agricultural range, the salary for agricultural communities is \$81 to \$126,000. So that's where the recommended range lines up more with these benchmarks.

Chairman Jefferies asked if there were any more questions. Then said thank you to Mrs. Sharpe.

COUNTY MANAGER UPDATES:

County Manager Meszaros said so just a couple items. The TDA didn't have their item prepared. They wanted to come to you about the board member ex-officio. That'll be on the next agenda. I didn't get that till this afternoon.

PCC is asking about golf sponsorship. That was in our budget last year; I don't know if that's something that the Commission wishes to continue. It is in the budget. I usually don't ask about those things, but I don't want to throw it out there, if it's kind of an issue.

The Open House is on Wednesday. You've probably been getting a lot of flyers and information, but that's with the Dominion Gas Line that's coming through the county. So they're going to be on Tuesday, tomorrow, from 5 to 7 at Oak Haven properties. That's located at 1434 Dibrell Road in Pelham, and then on Wednesday, they'll be here from 5 to 7 pm at Yanceyville Town Hall. Again, it's a liaison, and they're presenting their open house for the community on the gas line so if citizens or any of us have questions. I can also have her come do an update for the Commissioners, if you choose to do that.

Then I was going to go over all the 911 stuff, but you've already brought that up. So I don't think I need to address that unless you had questions about what happened. I do want to real quickly have Johnna come back up and talk about an update about the 23 audit. And just to be clear on the last item, until we have either reclass or direction. I don't really have materials to go out and actively recruit for that Finance position. I do have the budget and the authorization. We would be looking at an Accounting position that we talked about today about getting that advertised because I do think and we all consulted, I think we're at a point where we're ready to start getting some team to help us with some of this log and get finances moving forward. So Johnna.

Mrs. Sharpe said I did just want to give an update on the 23 audit to follow up on Mr. Thompson's comments. So they have done a tremendous amount of the testing, but the last step is to get a trial balance. Then make sure that all their testing agrees with what the final numbers are. We're having some challenges with some of the 23 numbers that they're not in as good a shape as I expected. In some cases, we are having to go all the way through 24 to make sure that both years are right. So the good news is on that side, we're making some early progress on 24. But it is taking a little bit longer to get, in certain areas, the trial balance done. It's not efficient to give it to the auditors until we know the numbers are good. So I would like to think in the next three weeks to a month, we can have the biggest issues resolved, but it seems like every time we touch an issue, it raises another issue. Some of the issues are impacting the current fiscal year. So we're trying to keep all three years moving forward and going at the same time. So it's really looking like we're doing 23 and 24 a lot together. Then it will just depend on the auditor's capacity when we get them the trial balance. There's not a tremendous amount of work left for them to do other than tying out all of their work papers to the final numbers, and they will of course want to see all of our adjustments. So if I had to describe it, it's somewhat like a scavenger hunt and a jigsaw puzzle all at the same time because some of the pieces are two years

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ago and some of the issues we're finding go back more than that. So there's just a lot of things to make sure that we're getting the books right and that we know the impacts for 25 and beyond. So we are doing our best, but when you're doing stuff that's two years old where other people did the work and trying to piece it all together, it can be a little time consuming.

Commissioner Dickerson said how many people are currently working on that process? Mrs. Sharpe said we have the Isley group, who is still continuing to support us in the process, myself, Melissa Miller, and then other staff are helping research and pull documents as we go.

Commissioner Dickerson said how many other staff members would you say? Mrs. Sharpe said excuse me. Commissioner Dickerson said how many other staff members would you say are helping you. Mrs. Sharpe said those are the primary ones that are working. County Manager Meszaros said it requires some of these, all the grants and all the Department Heads with issues in their projects. Mrs. Sharpe said yes. So we're working with the Departments when we have those issues, but they're also, a lot of the staff currently in Finance, keeping the day-to-day going. Because while we're trying to catch up these audits, they're still having to pay bills, having to run payrolls, and having to manage the budgets. You know it's a lot, but some of this reconciling of the accounts is not an easy process. It's sometimes not even an easy process for me because it has gotten, in some cases, very complicated, out of whack, and we need lots of other documentation in order to try and zero in on what the right numbers are because departments may submit reports to the state and requests reimbursement. But where the gap has occurred is making sure that those are the same numbers that are in the financial statements or that are in the financial system. Because the financial system is the official accounting record of the county, and so what we're finding is there are some differences between what departments have been accounting for and what's happened in the Finance Office. So it's trying to recreate those records to determine what is really the right answer so that we can record it properly, and there's got to be enough evidence to know what that right answer is and that we can justify changes to the financial records.

Commissioner Gwynn said I noticed they mentioned in one of the summaries that there was a lot of missing or what have you. Is that something that's going to be worked on? Mrs. Sharpe said yes, that's being worked on now. So that's one of the big areas that we've worked on improving. We've change some configurations in the system; we're doing more frequent reconciliations. We're making sure that revenues are recorded in revenue accounts and expenditures are recorded in expenditure accounts because when that doesn't happen, that gets everything out of sync, especially with some of the federal grants and state grants that we get. The Auditors are provided a summary of what those revenues are, and the Auditors are looking to see that that's what we have in our records. When those don't match, that's an issue. So that's when we have to go figure out well did it get recorded in the wrong place or did it not get recorded at all. We've almost completed the 23 bank reconciliation, and the bank reconciliation is key because everything you do goes through cash. So everything that goes through that bank statement has to be found on the ledgers. In some cases, that has been a challenge, or there have been things in the ledgers that aren't on the bank statement. So you do tens of thousands of transactions a year. So sometimes

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it's like looking for a needle and a haystack, but we're down to five items that we're trying to identify where they might should have or supposed to be recorded. When those are done, then we'll know that we've at least got all the cash accounted for in the bank. And now is it accounted for in the right places. You don't know that until you completely finish the revenues or expenditures of a fund and really see does this make sense at the end of the day. Some days it doesn't, and we have to go figure out what's the issue.

Commissioner Rose said I got a question. I know you don't want to hear it. Do you have any idea on how long this is going to take for you or for finance to get all their stuff to the Isley group? Mrs. Sharpe said I really think we're... There are a couple really big issues that if we can get those resolved, then the rest of the work is pretty clear. So I'm hoping within the next month. Commissioner Rose said second question. Is this going to scare a new Finance Director completely off coming into the door? We have not got everything complete, or would we be better to have our house in order and then hire a new Finance Director? Mrs. Sharpe said maybe you'll find someone who likes a challenge. I think it makes sense to go ahead and try and see what we can find. You know see if we can be successful now because the right person can come in, can learn while we're working through some of these issues, and be in a good place. Also it won't be long before you'll need to be starting to work on the next year's budget. It is critical for your Finance Officer to be here at the beginning of that budget process in my opinion. So I don't see any harm in starting the process now, especially if we're able to find the right qualified person. And Commissioner Dickerson asking about the numbers that are working on this right now, and we had this discussion today. If you bring in more temporary people, I'm not sure that's going to be helpful, which is why we said let's go ahead and bring in the Accounting Specialist who can really pick up some of this reconciliation work which is what's really holding us up. The stuff that's left to do right now is hard, and quite frankly it takes someone with my level of experience to try and figure this out. So bringing in someone who doesn't see how all the pieces connect and understand the complexities, would not be a good use of the County's money. Also right now, remember I'm with you at no cost. The association continues to cover this investment in Caswell because they want to see Caswell positioned to succeed. We also need to get the 23 audit done, but we can't create more issues and challenges in 25. So in a lot of cases, we're having to stop, fix what's happening now, and then get back to 23 and 24. We don't want to keep digging the hole. So we know the hole of 23, but we want to make sure we're not creating a new hole in 25.

Commissioner Dickerson said question. You're very knowledgeable, and first I want to say thank you for all you have done for this county. If you had not been here helping our department through this, we'd be in a lot of trouble. What you are finding; are you finding it's poor reporting or misplaced information from a Finance Director from long go? Are you finding any evidence of wrongdoing? Is any money missing? Mrs. Sharpe said that's a great question, and no we have seen no signs of any money missing. There is nothing that has led us to believe that, but we have seen a lack of attention to detail, a lack of knowledge of some standard practices and procedures,

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a lack of knowledge in some cases of statutory requirements, and some of that stems back years. One of the issues we're struggling with right now goes back to 2017. So we're having to go and figure that out because it involves State grant money. Our records don't agree. So at some point, we've got to reach an agreement on that, but that requires a lot of research to make sense of the records that we have when the people who were here and did that are no longer here. So I see no evidence of wrongdoing. I see evidence of lack of experience and knowledge. Commissioner Dickerson said well I'd like you to think Caswell is a beautiful place. Mrs. Sharpe said it is. Commissioner Dickerson said and I understand we're going to have a Finance Director's position open here pretty soon. You might want to come to Caswell County. Mrs. Sharpe said well I consider that a compliment. Thank you, but I will tell you I'm here till we get this straight. Whatever it takes. I'm not going to give up. I'm not a person who gives up easily, and I'm actually one of those people who loves a challenge. So I get kidded a lot because Melissa, I work in her office most days, and I'll go yay. It's like we figured out something; we got it straight finally. That happened on one thing today so we can put that to rest. It's behind us. It's fixed through 24, and now we're moving on.

Commissioner Gwynn said I notice in the report sometimes there were not proper documentation. Mrs. Sharpe said yes ma'am. Commissioner Gwynn said and that's a biggie. Mrs. Sharpe said yes. Commissioner Gwynn said is that being worked on? Mrs. Sharpe said yes ma'am, and that is really getting, I think it's got much better in 24. So over the last year that's been a real concentrated effort to make sure that that is done. And so you still may see some of that in 23, but I would really think we've made tremendous strides on that in 24. Commissioner Gwynn said so the staff has been made aware that they need receipts. Mrs. Sharpe said oh absolutely. That's where if you don't have receipts, if you don't have a budget, and if you don't have that stuff, we're telling people no because you've got to follow the proper processes. That's not real popular right now, but if you don't start making some of those changes and implementing correct processes, they're never going to get fixed. So it's no time like the present to start implementing new rules. I joke with Melissa and I'd say this in front of the Sheriff. But I kind of tell them there's a new sheriff in town in Finance, and we're doing things the right way. Even if it's different than how it's been done in the past, we're doing it right.

COUNTY ATTORNEY UPDATES:

County Attorney Johnston said thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Board. Good evening. At your last meeting you requested that I contact the North Carolina Wildlife Commission to determine if the shooting range at the Wildlife Game Lands could accommodate the Sheriff's Department for their qualification purposes. I reached out to Travis Casper with the Wildlife Commission, and Joshua Jernigan, who is actually the Supervisor over the Caswell County Game Land Shooting Range. They expressed enthusiasm in working with the county and the Sheriff's Department, and as it turns out, the Wildlife Game Lands, they've actually had plans to construct a new range facility out there. However once Mr. Jernigan contacted the Sheriff's Department, it became apparent that the facility out there was unable to provide the

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qualifications for the Sheriff's Deputies for what they're looking for. So at this point, it doesn't look like the Game Land Shooting Range is an option for the Sheriff's Department. If I receive any additional information in the future, I'll keep this Board updated. I also reached out to the Rockingham County Gun Club. I reached out to the club president, Mr. Clem Ellis along with Stephen Broad, who is the Membership Chairman. They also expressed interest in working with the county and the Sheriff's Department. I forwarded their information to the Sheriff's Department. It's my understanding they're in discussions at this point, but I do not have any updates for the Board at this time. I also reached out to a Chuck Kirchner with the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality as it relates to having a shooting range on a Landfill. So the Department of Environmental Quality, they actually oversee landfills, active landfills and inactive landfills, in the state of North Carolina. Mr. Kirchner and myself had multiple discussions along with our Solid Waste Director, AJ Fuqua, and the Department of Environment Quality is asking for a post closure use plan. They also want the county to address how we will protect the landfill cap and gas and groundwater monitoring wells. How the county can protect the gas and ground water monitoring wells from people and vehicles coming into the firing range, but it doesn't appear that's going to be a roadblock. It just appears that the state wants to have proper plans, proper documentation, and proper safety mechanisms in place if this Board does indeed decide to move forward. So I'll keep you guys updated on that as well. Those are my updates during the open meeting, and I'll have further updates for you in the Closed Session. Thank you.

Commissioner Dickerson said what were the differences between the State shooting range and the Sheriff's Department? You had my attention talking about how enthusiastic the State was, and when they talked to the Sheriff's Office, it fell apart. What could not be worked out? Is it something that we can work with the State to implement where it would be feasible for the Sheriff's Office? Attorney Johnston said Commissioner Dickerson, I'm not sure of the specifics. I don't know if it had to do with the distance of the range, the size, or the space, but I'll be glad to research those specifics and report that back to you. I was just informed that the Sheriff's Department would be unable to utilize that facility because it wouldn't be able to accommodate the state qualifications for the Sheriff's Deputies. Commissioner Dickerson said yes, I'd like to know what it is. Some minor change or something we can do. It'd be easier to do it there than it is to open up a shooting range and take all that liability on us. I'm very concerned about the liability going forward. The gentleman... Well we can talk about that later. But yes I'm very much so wondering if you had a million dollars' worth of liability, one wrongful death lawsuit would eat that whole million dollars up and the county is on the hook for the rest of it. So the fact that we have insurance is not really the issue here. We're on the hook for anything in excess of it, and if you have claims, then your policy premiums will go up. Accidents happen. I don't know if everybody in this room remembers years ago when it was a judge that shot a police officer at a range in Danville right up off of Westover Drive. Accidents happen even under the best circumstances, and I just don't know if this County should open themselves up to that. So I

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would like to know if there's a possibility that we could straighten out whatever kind of issue there are between the state and the Sheriff's Department needs for the facility. It would be a whole lot better money spent on that than it would to try to undertake a shooting range in my opinion. So yes sir, I would like to see what the differences are and see if it's something we can work with. Attorney Johnston said yes sir. I'll gather additional research and report back to this Board. Commissioner Dickerson said thank you.

Chairman Jefferies asked if there was anything else. Then asked if there was anything else from the Attorney. Attorney Johnston said no sir Commissioner Jefferies. I'll have another update for you in the Closed Session. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

There were no Commissioner Comments.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS:

- September 2, 2024 Offices will be closed to observe Labor Day
- September 3, 2024 Board of Commissioners Meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Historic Courthouse

CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was made at 8:02 pm by Commissioner Gwynn and seconded by Commissioner McVey and **carried unanimously** to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged. NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3), and to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee, which is hereby acknowledged NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (6). (Ayes: Commissioners McVey, Yarbrough, Rose, Dickerson, Gwynn, and Jefferies)

ADJOURNMENT:

A **motion** was made at 9:34 pm by Commissioner Yarbrough and seconded by Commissioner Rose and **carried unanimously** to adjourn the meeting. (Ayes: Commissioners Yarbrough, Rose, Dickerson, Gwynn, Dickerson and Jefferies)

Carla R. Smith
Clerk to the Board

Jeremiah Jefferies
Chairman

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