

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEMBERS PRESENT

September 3, 2024
OTHERS PRESENT

Jeremiah Jefferies, Chair
Finch Holt, Vice Chair
John Dickerson
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 Tuesday, September 3, 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 September 3, 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:

There were no recognitions.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

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

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. August 15, 2024 Joint Town Meeting Minutes
- b. August 17, 2024 Closed Session Meeting Minutes
- c. August 19, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

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

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

There were no discussion items.

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ACTION ITEMS:

RECLASSIFICATION OF FINANCE DIRECTOR POSITION:

County Manager Meszaros said Mrs. Sharpe is not available tonight due to a family emergency, and neither is the Interim Finance Director due to a family issue. But this was presented and continued from the last meeting. So the updated information is the new position announcement, which was included in the packet at this time as well as the previous one. Mrs. Sharpe at the last meeting went over a little bit how she did the, as a representative for the NCACC, salary compensation and her recommendation. That is included. She wanted me to address that in the previous presentations to the Board both the Auditors and the representatives from the North Carolina Treasurers Office have emphasized the need for the county to attract and retain a qualified Finance staff. So there is a recommended action or Motion in the written presentation here for you. The fiscal impact should have no impact in the 25 budget because of the prolonged vacancy savings, the offset, and the salary increase. So with those three positions being vacant this long, it shouldn't really have an issue if you increase the position for the Finance Director. We do have currently the Accounting position is advertised. That's one of those other two vacancies in the department. I think now that... We're not fully caught up through all the audits, but I think that they could bring somebody on board and more easily get them to assist and help. She talked about that last time. So if you have any additional questions or items you'd like to address, I'll try to answer those.

Commissioner Dickerson said Mr. Meszaros, I really can't give a vote on that tonight with any kind of in depth knowledge of it. There was a security upgrade on the email. I had the I.T. gentleman fix it for me, but I haven't had a chance to look that agenda over and read any of that information. So I would respectfully ask that this Board postpone this until we have our next meeting to decide on it. I can't weigh in. County Manager Meszaros said sure. I do want to say that I have had some of you call and ask why the position is not noticed. Well it's really hard to do that without a classification or a pay range. So until we know what that is, I think our premonition is if you put a notice out with no salary attached, which a lot of folks do that in their recruitment right now, we could definitely get some qualified people that apply and come forward. But then when you get to negotiation with them, and if they're like oh I need to make \$160,000, it kind of wastes everybody's time to get to that juncture rather than to advertise it with the known amount that we're willing to pay. So I would say until you do make a decision, it's also going to probably be on hold with noticing it. Which is fine; it's been on hold a long time now.

Commissioner Yarbrough said Mr. County Manager, you have not advertised a position for the Finance Director at all. County Manager Meszaros said not at all. So we have our recommendation is to reclass it as a Chief Financial Officer, which isn't just a finance department budget person doing the finance role. It's a person overseeing all of the county grants, all of the departments, all of the operations, and kind of quantitatively overseeing the entire County fiscally like what Mrs. Sharpe is providing from the association. Commissioner Yarbrough said

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okay, that was my next question. Who is doing those duties now? She is? County Manager Meszaros said she's doing a big majority of that. We also have the Accounting Firm that's helping with some of our day-to-day, but then it's the limited staff we have doing our ongoing day-to-day of paying the bills and reconciling the checks. So that's why it's taken time to get some of the latest work with the audits done because you have the same two or three people doing all of that work. Commissioner Yarbrough said but as far as these extra duties that the CFO would have, who... Let's just take for example if Mrs. Sharpe was not here helping us out, who's responsibility is it to have do those jobs now? County Manager Meszaros said so all of the finance goes under the Finance Department Head whether you call that a Finance Director or Chief Financial Officer. And ultimately all of these personnel at the department level report to myself or directly to the Board. So the Finance position in counties generally is accountable to the manager and the board. So you don't really supervise them unless it's like an elected official, but they tend to do a lot of direct interaction with the council by recommending things for departments, overseeing the audit presentations, providing you with the budget work, and actually presenting directly to you rather than as an interface through management. Commissioner Yarbrough said so since this position has not been advertised as is or as it currently stands, we don't know if someone is interested in it at that level. County Manager Meszaros said correct. I do know that Person County went through a full cycle, and they did not get any qualified experienced applicants. So they've raised their pay to 97 to 157, and they're roughly the same operation as us. They're kind of like our twin. They have a little more finances, a little more business, but statutorily we probably have more grants and more fiscal accountability than they do. Commissioner Yarbrough said Mr. Chairman, since at least one of the Board has not been able to see the update on the CFO responsibilities, I suggest we hold off on this until our next meeting.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Yarbrough and seconded by Commissioner McVey and **carried unanimously** to table this item until the next meeting. (Ayes: Commissioners McVey, Yarbrough, Rose, Dickerson, Holt, and Jefferies)

BUDGET AMENDMENTS:

a. LIBRARY:

County Manager Meszaros said the two items before you are both budget amendments. They're numbered number one and two since they're the first and second budget amendments being brought before you. The first one is the library fund, and the second is the Sheriff's Office. These are both within the general fund. I'll start with the library or the library fund. In order to expend funds during the year, you have to obligate that budget. So the county budget, once adopted, requires Board approval to increase any total amount in any fund that goes above budget allocation. So the first one is the library fund. They actually have an auditory, the audio books or books on tape. They had a donation of about \$65,000, and I believe they try to allocate about \$10 to \$15,000 a year to actually spend on that or that can only be used for that purpose. It was a

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private citizen, which donated this, but they did not have that included in in the allocation. The other one is expenditures, and that's about \$15,000. So those can only be used for those purposes, but in order to utilize them, they have to be budgeted for.

b. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT:

County Manager Meszaros said then the second one is a grant. It's a Federal grant. The Sheriff's Department would use that for the schools and the two towns. That's overtime budget with an allocation of \$20,000. That was a corrected copy sent out over the weekend. I don't know if you saw that or didn't see that. There was an error in the original document that was forwarded out so that was recent. So the total on that is \$17,200 not 20, but it's a technical error. Johnna sent the wrong form so she forwarded that out again to the clerk, and we re-disseminated that. But all of these have funds so we're not doing a match. We're not needing to come up with additional monies. This is just an overall budget change with funds that are coming from outside third parties.

Commissioner Rose said I think we've got three budget amendments. We got one for the library, and two for the Sheriff's Office. County Manager Meszaros said so they're combined into one amendment. There are two items in that Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Rose said this one was on the desk when I came in. So it's three. The clerk said it's the corrected one. County Manager Meszaros said yeah the corrected one has two items in it. The clerk said that's the one that's on desk. The one that was corrected, and the one that was in the packet was not correct. County Manager Meszaros said right, but it's not numbered number three on there. I believe it's still number two.

Commissioner Rose said okay let's go back to the library. You say that money was in a donation? County Manager Meszaros said yes sir. Commissioner Rose said and they're just basically asking to use this \$15,000 from that? County Manager Meszaros said correct, and the Director is here if you wish to ask more detailed questions.

Commissioner Dickerson said so I'm having problems hearing you tonight. All this, all three budget amendments are two and one, that requires no taxpayer money. All this money is from grants that we have received. County Manager Meszaros said correct, or money that's already retained in the county accounts that we're just using to obligate in a budget amendment. That's correct sir.

Commissioner Rose said all right. That's the two budget amendments that we received in the packet. This one right here was on my desk is...County Manager Meszaros said a revision. Commissioner Rose said this one I think's going to be a little bit different. County Manager Meszaros said yes it's a correction. The first one that came out in the packet was inadvertent. It was an error in the spreadsheet. So she went back, noticed that, and sent out a correction. So that replaces the other Sheriff's Office budget amendment. I can hear a little better. Thank you. Commissioner Rose said okay. So you're saying this one replaces the one that was in the packet. County Manager Meszaros said that's my understanding. Commissioner Rose said well the one

in packet states that it is for the grant position from North Carolina Department of Public Safety. This one is a general fund, which basically states where the Sheriff's Office or where deputies from the Sheriff's Office have been working ball games, basketball games, and graduations where they been getting paid from the school. According to this in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards, this extra duty now should be paid from the county and reimburse from the town. County Manager Meszaros said that's sounds correct. Commissioner Rose said well there's a couple of issues I have with this one. One, who's going to keep up with the hours that's being worked? Who's going to track the money that's supposed to be reimburse to the county, and the other thing is when you get into, if someone's working off duty that's one thing, but if they're going to count it as hours worked, then retirement's going to change and 401K is going to change. I don't think that's been taken into consideration. County Manager Meszaros said so this is all additional overtime salary, and it goes into Munis. The Sheriff's Department works on their budget monthly, and they know how much allocation they have total. So every department head has to keep them accountable to their budgets, and it's just upping the allocation of overtime to have a different amount. So however they normally do those processes, this would just be an additional amount of funding that could be allocated towards those purposes. I don't think anybody's here from that department. Commissioner Rose said but normally in the pass what would happen is if somebody worked off duty, they got paid directly from the school system. County Manager Meszaros said I don't know how that worked. Commissioner Rose said I'm explaining it to you. When you worked off duty, you got paid from the school system. We did not get paid from the county. County Manager Meszaros said I don't have anybody from Finance. It's harder to do it that way because everything like you said social security and benefit deductions, that all is difficult because they have to do that. Commissioner Rose said I'd like to check, or I'd like to look into that one before we do anything with that just to see because I don't want to run into any issues. Mr. Attorney, you may be able to look at it as far as the Fair Labor Standards and all, especially if somebody's working off duty. I don't know how that's going to apply, but I just want to make sure that the money is being kept track of. And if it does come down to where we have to do that, I have no problem with it as long as we can track the money and the money is being reimbursed like it should be. County Manager Meszaros said I think it makes more sense to all be on one timesheet and be all in the same system. That way they don't have the problem of oh I worked 40 hours, but now I'm doing additional duty over here for overtime that I'm not being compensated at. Commissioner Rose said yeah, but that normally was paid by another entity because you were not working or you were not quote "on duty". You were doing off time work. And I think this is the first time this has ever came up. County Manager Meszaros said yeah, it's hard because if they're wearing our uniform, they're basically doing work for County representation whether we're paying them or someone else is paying them. We can we can definitely get Finance to update you on that. They've reviewed all these things so it wouldn't be before you if they haven't already signed off and approved. But we can definitely answer those questions.

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Chairman Jefferies asked if anyone else had any questions.

Commissioner Dickerson said yes. Why are these coming to us now as budget amendments and not presented at the time of the regular budget? County Manager Meszaros said because they've come up since the budget was approved. So this is new information that the Sheriff and the library have come across, and I presume with the library that you saw the funds need to be used. Library Director Patrick Fitzgerald said I'm sorry? County Manager Meszaros said I presume you saw they needed to use the funds and buy the books. Mr. Fitzgerald said yeah, we're needing to get a hold of these funds, but we did not know that we needed to separately appropriate them back into the budget. County Manager Meszaros said so when Johnna comes back, some of those things they just did carryover funds, and all of this stuff was very loosely controlled. So now that we're putting it all in tighter fiscal responsibility and tighten it all down, you got to put those separate funds, allocate them in the budget, and track them. They didn't have codes before, and as they go through, audit, and get things up to speed, that's the kind of stuff that happens when it wasn't handled in appropriate fiscal policies. Commissioner Dickerson said I'm not trying to be difficult, but you say that it's something that just came up. Haven't they always been providing security at basketball and football games? That's been going on for years. I mean that is not something that happened since we approved the budget. County Manager Meszaros said I don't know how they reimbursed that in the past. I do know there's SRO positions that the school district's supposed to match, and those grants don't all line up to what we think they should in our side of the getting the funds. That's why being up to current practices on all the audits and making sure everything is checked and balanced, it's a challenge when you come into an entity that's three or four years behind. You really don't have any clue. You look at it, and you go wow. The people who we're paying to fix all this, they're just as bewildered as you are sir. It's not a lot of fun. That's why it's challenging to find good Finance people in this market. They're going to come in and take responsibility for all this, and we're trying to get it as cleaned up as possible. But I don't have an answer to that because I don't know. The finance people would have to explain to you what the Auditors and how they came across that. Commissioner Dickerson said I'm looking forward to it.

Chairman Jefferies said something, and Commissioner McVey said we couldn't hear you, Mr. Jefferies. Chairman Jefferies said do the Board need to put this back on the agenda to give the County Manager a chance to research and come up with the answer on what we need to do? Can I get a motion that we table these two items? Commissioner Rose said I think the two that we got in the packet are self-explanatory. I mean I think that's those grant positions. This one I've got an issue with because that one's something totally different, but that's going to be up to the Board how they want to proceed. Chairman Jefferies said well give me a motion on what we need to do. The Commissioners start to chatter. Commissioner Dickerson said would it be simpler to just wait till we had the finance people here at the next meeting? Commissioner Rose said I mean I think the library and this grant position, you know the grant position has been there I think it's maybe the second or third year it's been there. So I think it's already been in there before. This

right here is the first I'm seeing of this one. The one issue I take with it is it's basically increasing the overtime line item, but it says this budget amendment is necessary to adjust the overtime line for cost to be reimbursed by the third party. How do we know that the third part is going to reimburse? That's my question.

Chairman Jefferies said I need a motion for the library if we're going to do the library.

Commissioner Yarbrough said I'm good with the library.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Yarbrough and seconded by Commissioner McVey and **carried 4 - 2** to approve the amendment for the library. (Ayes: Commissioners McVey, Yarbrough, Rose, and Jefferies No: Commissioners Dickerson and Holt)

Chairman Jefferies said we need you to come back with the update on this for the Sherriff. We'll move forward. Thank you. County Manager Meszaros said yes sir.

ARTS COUNCIL MURAL:

Karen Williamson, from the Caswell Council for the Arts, said good evening Commissioners, and thank you for letting me speak before you for this evening. Oh goodness. I'm here before you to ask for your vote to proceed forward with the Arts Council's Mural Project. And before I go forward, I just want to acknowledge that I've got board members here from the Arts Council. I've got a representative from the Friends of the Thomas Day House, and I have representatives here from the Caswell County Historical Association. All of these people are in favor of moving forward with the mural. The proposal is to have the mural painted on the Main Street side of Co-Square, and actually before I move forward I have some handouts that I'd like to share with you all. So you'll have something to look at. On the handout that I gave you, the accomplishments that we've had thus far is that we have earned or been awarded a \$10,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for the mural. We have letters of support from Senator Tom Tillis and Representative Kathy Manning. We have verbal support from Appalachian State University's Department of Hospitality and Tourism, the Caswell County Historical Association, the Caswell County Schools, the Tourism Development Authority, The Visitors Center, Caswell History Speaks, the Friends of Thomas Day in Historic Milton, the Gunn Memorial Library, North Carolina Arts Council, and Piedmont Community College. On the next page, I do want to direct your attention to this page that says the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. Because the building is older than 50 years and we have received Federal grant money to move forward with the mural, we had to get permission from the State Historic Preservation Office before we could move forward. This letter outlines that they have given their permission saying that it's okay for us to move forward with the process. Okay. So those are the accomplishments that we've had thus far.

So near-term goals again is to gain your approval to move forward with painting the mural, and once we get started it'll take approximately 3 to 4 weeks for us to complete. We plan to invite some students from BY High School, some art students, to help us complete that project.

Midterm goals, we will have web pages dedicated to the mural. We will host an unveiling at Co-

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Square so members of the public, family members, descendants, dignitaries, and people from the community will be invited to be there for the unveiling. Tours of Co-Square could be conducted at that time. We'll also have mural merchandise available such as postcards, self-guided tour maps, and etc. Then long-term goals: Caswell Arts, we will maintain the ownership and the maintenance of the mural for 10 years. Information will have a QR code that will go along with the mural, and that information will be updated as information becomes available. We will also collaborate with local organizations to create more murals throughout the community. So we're hoping that this is the first of many. So turn to the next page. This is just a map of Court Square. We will start on the square where you are looking at Watlington's Store. There on a guided tour someone can learn about that part of the square and Neal Watlington. Go 90degrees to the left to the brick house and have the story about Henrietta Jeffries. Going 90 degrees to the left again and you will get the story about N.L Dillard. His story being the former principal of Caswell County High School and N.L. Dillard Middle School. He was also a teacher at the Rosenwald School. Then going 90 degrees again to the left you will be at the Richmond-Miles History Museum. This is where the history of Maude Gatewood would be found. So again this is just a rudimentary sample. This mural will tell the history and provide tours. People will get to take the tour created by CCHA. The last page is a picture of the people who will be featured in this project. Again we will have the QR code that will tell the story of each of these individuals.

Chairman Jefferies said you all heard the proposal, what is the pleasure of the Board?

Commissioner Dickerson said I've got a question. I've been looking at the rendering of the mural and reading Where historic figures unified: story of our Town Square in Caswell, this seems to me to be missing something. There's no farmer on here or any mention of tobacco and the heritage that made this county what it is. Ms. Williamson said that's not what this mural is about. We are hoping again that this mural is going to tell the story of the past, and we're hoping that future murals will be done to focus on other things. I'm not saying this is a one and done. This is one of hopefully others to come. One of the conversations that I had earlier about the mural was doing it on memorials. I support that. So to answer your question, you're right. You're not going to see that on this mural, but we're hoping that there will be other murals in the future.

Commissioner Dickerson said well I can understand that you hope there'll be future murals, but you've got the money in hand to do one now. Something that important, what if we never get another opportunity to do it, and we've given a prominent place that we could have upheld the farmers that were the backbone of this county. Without them, this town square wouldn't be here. Ms. Williamson said there are other things we could look at. I'm not saying that. That is a prominent location. One location that we did look at was the other side of the Merchantile. We were not successful in procuring that location. Other properties that have brick walls we could paint murals on. I'm not saying that this is the one and done. We have to have painters and raise the funds. As long as there is someone that tells that story, we have it. Commissioner Dickerson said are you aware that one of the figures on this mural presentation is kind of controversial? Ms. Williamson said which one? Commissioner Dickerson said Miss Gatewood. Ms. Williamson

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said how is she controversial? Commissioner Dickerson said in that in one of the meetings, I was told in phone call a couple of days ago, that she insulted the farmers of this county when they were over here arguing about an issue that was important to them. They let her know that they would be voting her out of office if she did not see things the way the farming community did, and she made some disparaging comment to the effect of if the likes of them were going to turn on her and vote her out that that was a good thing. I have not had a chance to let the Clerk to the Board check into this because I got late information. But I'm going to ask that those minutes from the meetings in that era be examined because I won't support a mural with somebody like that on it, if that's true. Ms. Williamson said well I'm not aware of that. One of the reasons why we chose to include her again is because of her having the museum that is at the Municipal Building. There have been tours that have taken place here in Caswell County from people wanting to see her work, and the CCHA building right across the street, where her home is located, these are draws. These are tourism draws for people to come to Caswell County. So yes, she is a controversial figure, but I think if we focus on her art, the contribution that she has contributed to the art, and knowing that her art hangs in not only UNC Greensboro, UNC Charlotte, and the Smithsonian Institution. She's got an exhibit that is going on right now at the Blowing Rock Museum. Her art is what people are celebrating. Commissioner Dickerson said there may be a whole lot of folks that champion her, but if this is true about her, there'll be a lot of them that don't want it up there as well. Again I'm very sympathetic to the farmers of this community. I appreciate all that they have done to make Caswell what it is. Without them, we'd be in a dire situation. They still provide a lot of tax revenue that keeps this county up, and if this is true, I will not support it by disrespecting them. Ms. Williamson said if we were to find another location to highlight the farming community of Caswell County, would you support this? Commissioner Dickerson said I will not support one with her on it, if it's true what has been accused. If she is guilty of what she's been accused of, if someone can find that in minutes, I will not support a mural with her on it. Ms. Smith, after the meeting I'll talk with you about the time frame. I'd like for you to try to pull those records of that time. I know it's going to be hard because it's back in the day, but I'd like to see if I can get you to research that for me. The clerk agreed.

Ms. Williamson said does anybody else... Have I addressed, I know that not we haven't come to an agreement, but have I addressed your other concerns? Do you have any other questions for me?

Commissioner Yarbrough said Ms. Williamson, you and I had a conversation. I believe last week you had called me. Ms. Williamson said yes. Commissioner Yarbrough said and we played phone tag for a few days, but we finally got up with each other. You asked if I had any questions. I said no, but I did have a couple of concerns. I voiced those concerns to you, and one of those was that veterans were not included. You made the same statement that you made tonight about future murals. I said okay. One other comment and concern that I made to you was that, like Mr. Dickerson, agriculture and specifically tobacco was not included. Now whether or not anyone in

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any of these groups is a fan or a foe of tobacco is not my concern, but you made the statement to me that the discussion was to use tobacco leaves in the background on the wall. But what I'm hearing tonight is that will not be the case. Ms. Williamson said no. We can still address that. One of the ideas that we had come up with is to have around the QR code, that we're going to have on the mural, is to have it supported, if you will, by bundles of tobacco. So that will be visually depicted in the mural, and here's another idea that I just came up with. I'll still have to talk to my board about this. We could have in the QR code... We'll have links that will again tell the story of the four individuals that are presented here, but then additionally we can have links that address the farming community, the agriculture, and the equipment that they use. So these are things that we could add or use as add-ons, and that again would be part of the tourism part and education part of when people come here and take the picture of the of the QR code. Then it just leads them to the information that they're most interested in. So that is something that we can address. Did I answer your question, Mr. Yarbrough? Commissioner Yarbrough said yes and no. I was under the impression or maybe it was my fault I may not have understood what our conversation was on the phone. Rather than tobacco being delegated to one small corner somewhere... Ms. Williamson said it's not going to be a small... Commissioner Yarbrough said but it's my understanding from you was let's just take this yellow background that you have here and that tobacco would be prominent in that background. Ms. Williamson said and again we can discuss that. I'll have to talk with the artist about that, and we can use the tobacco, if you will, the tobacco leaves. Right now I can't say for sure, but I need to bring that to my board about having that as a wallpaper, if you will. Then the images on top of the wallpaper of tobacco leaves. Commissioner Yarbrough said okay. I can live with that if you can get it, but my only other concern is like Commissioner Dickerson brought up if we have an individual there that, and whoever I don't... I'm not saying Ms. Gatewood but whoever it may be, the mural may be of if there are some controversy that's surrounding that individual, we might have to rethink that thing. Ms. Williamson said do you have a suggestion of another individual. Commissioner Yarbrough said I do no. I have zero suggestions. Zero, but if the people or persons that are depicted on the mural are possibly someone that has caused conflict in the past, having a mural of them might not be the best idea. But I don't know whether it's true or not. Tonight's the first I've heard of it, but it needs to be checked into.

Ms. Williamson said Mr. Dickerson do you have an idea of an individual? The criteria that we used was that the individuals had to have some connection to the square, and there had to be a picture of them. So that ruled out some people that we had considered, but there are no visual pictures that we could use as proof of their image being on the mural. Commissioner Dickerson said I have an idea. How about instead of singling in on any one in particular, you have one tobacco farmer from the early generation that would be representative of all the farmers that have put blood, sweat, and tears into the land of this county to make it what it is today. Ms. Williamson said and I understand where you're coming from. However, the grant money that we

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have received from the NEA is specific to this, and we'd end up not doing it and having to give the money back.

Commissioner Yarborough said what kind of deadline are you looking at? I'm sure there's one attached to the grant money. Ms. Williamson said well we have until December 31st to complete the project. So time is definitely coming to... Commissioner Yarborough said and the project will take approximately how long? Ms. Williamson said well once we get started from beginning to end, it'll take between three and four weeks weather depending. Commissioner Yarborough said okay. Thank you.

Commissioner McVey said Mr. Chairman, why don't we table this for the time being until Ms. Smith has time to get this information to us. Maybe we can have this at our next meeting.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner McVey and seconded by Commissioner Dickerson and **carried unanimously** to table this until the next meeting. (Ayes: Commissioners McVey, Yarborough, Rose, Dickerson, Holt, and Jefferies)

TDA BOARD MEMBER EX-OFFICIO:

County Manger Meszaros said so the Yanceyville Town Mayor, Alvin Foster, also is the chairman of the Caswell County Economic Development Commission, and that commission has currently four ex-officio seats. That would be Piedmont Community College, Caswell County Board of Education, Caswell Cooperative Extension, and the Caswell Chamber. We've been asked to add a fifth, which would be the TDA, the Tourism Development Authority. This would be a non-voting member, and Mayor Foster is not able to be here with us this evening. He has asked all of the entities that are the appointment entities, which is Caswell County, Town of Yanceyville, and the Town of Milton who each have three members making up the nine members, are being asked to vote Yes or No to the question do you want to have an ex-officio from the TDA on the board. This would just have them there. They could come anyway, but they would be there as an ex-officio without any voting powers to participate like the other four currently do. So I know it's a simple request, but he just needs a yes or no. I'm not sure what happens if any of the entities says no, if they still do it. I'm not sure, but the bylaws for that entity would have to be looked at. So it's up to you. They, the Economic Development Commission, voted, and it was approved. It was not a unanimous approval, but it was approved at the actual Economic Development Commission.

Commissioner Dickerson said the ones that voted against it, what were their reasons. County Manager Meszaros said they didn't give any reasons. The person's not here this evening. I don't know. I guess there's nine members so we get board's too big. It's nine plus the four, or nine plus the five would be 14 members. But I think most of the board did approve to accept. So I Amanda is here if you want to ask any questions.

Chairman Jefferies asked if anyone else had any comments on this.

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Commissioner Yarbrough said Mr. Meszaros, this is an ex-officio non-voting member. County Manager Meszaros said yes sir. Commissioner Yarbrough said but the member can attend the meetings regardless of whether they're on the board or not. County Manager Meszaros said correct sir, and the general public can attend. It's a public meeting so we do have citizens and people that participate and attend. They would not be a voting member. They would be listed when they do the minutes. They would put them down as being present or not, and the intent is all the other ex-officios take the information back and share it with their groups.

County Manager Meszaros said one of the TDA board is here this evening if you'd allow her to speak. Is that okay? Chairman Jefferies said come on up ma'am if you got something you can tell us.

Amanda Hodges said good evening. My name is Amanda Hodges. I'm not on the board. I am the person working for the board right now on projects. So I just wanted you to know that, but the whole reason, as I understand it, is so that there is a position on Economic Development for tourism to be represented. Tourism is a very important part of Economic Development in rural communities. In fact, it's one of the easiest things because you don't have to build anything. You don't have to do anything, but pretty much market the community. We were here earlier or a couple weeks back providing you all the annual report for the work we've been doing over the past year. So we've been pleased with the work we've done. We have to give the money back to the community, and we've given back in grants more than the amount we were supposed to. We've also built a website. So we're just trying to capture those folks that are coming through our community going to the casino or wherever and have them spend money here so our businesses can collect the taxes and be better off. That's truly an economic impact, and that's why I think it's important. It's not about the person because it won't be me. It's just about that role. If the Chamber's on there, if the Extensions on there, the school is on there, and each town has a representative. Economic Development Council, so it seems like something that does economic development should be on it. We've already gotten approval, as I understand, the Town of Yanceyville approved it, the Town of Milton approved it, and the Economic Development board approved it. Now it has to come to you all per the way the statute's written. Maybe that helps clarify. Thank you.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner McVey and seconded by Commissioner Rose and **carried unanimously** to approve the ex-officio member on the Economic Development Commission. (Ayes: Commissioners McVey, Yarbrough, Rose, Dickerson, Holt, and Jefferies)

COUNTY MANAGER UPDATES:

There were no County Manager Comments.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Dickerson: I'd just like to say that I saw something amazing in the county earlier today. I saw a bald eagle on the side of the road off of Walters Mill Road, and that's the

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first one I've seen off the water in many years around here. I thought that was an amazing testimony to the comeback they're making.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS:

- September 16, 2024 Board of Commissioners Meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Historic Courthouse
- September 28, 2024 Bright Leaf Hoedown

CLOSED SESSION:

A motion was made at 7:22 pm by Commissioner Yarbrough and seconded by Commissioner McVey and **carried unanimously** 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, Holt, and Jefferies)

ADJOURNMENT:

A **motion** was made at 8:58 pm by Commissioner Rose and seconded by Commissioner Yarbrough and **carried unanimously** to adjourn the meeting. (Ayes: Commissioners McVey, Yarbrough, Rose, Dickerson, Holt, and Jefferies)

Carla R. Smith
Clerk to the Board

Jeremiah Jefferies
Chairman

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