

**CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**MEMBERS PRESENT**

**November 4, 2024**  
**OTHERS PRESENT**

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Jeremiah Jefferies, Chair  
Finch Holt, Vice Chair  
Ethel Gwynn  
Frank Rose

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Renee Paschal, County Manager  
Melissa Williamson, Deputy County Manager  
Russell Johnston, County Attorney  
Carla Smith, Clerk to the Board  
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The Board of Commissioners for the County of Caswell, North Carolina, met in a regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, November 4, 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 November 4, 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:**

County Manager Paschal read the Public Comment Statement before the public comment period began.

**John K. Roberts:** I've been a resident of Caswell County for over 35 years, and I do have one question. I asked previous County Manager and he told me he would get back to me. He didn't know. Does this County have a Solar Farm Ordinance? Does anyone know? County Manager Paschal said I'm sorry. I didn't hear you. Mr. Roberts said does anyone know? Does this County have a Solar Farm Ordinance? County Manager Paschal said we do. Chairman Jefferies said this county does have some solar farms on it. Mr. Roberts said right, but is there an ordinance? County Manager Paschal said according to a County Planner, Jason Watlington, it falls under our HIDO ordinance (High Impact on Development). Mr. Roberts said okay the other thing is I just want to remind every I'm still interested in the County Manager's job. I applied last year and gave you all my information. I hope that you all would consider me. I don't expect you to respond right now, but when it comes time to consider a County Manager, I would like to be considered and get an interview. That's all I had to say. Thank you.

**RECOGNITIONS:**

**Commissioner Gwynn:** I gave you all on your desk the events of PTRC. Tomorrow or Wednesday, the new County Manager and I will be going. I would like to bring up one of the things that we will be adding, and one of the things I would like to see happen is if Carla Smith could be the secretary for our group here. The other person to be chosen in January. So I would like to make a **motion** to have Carla on as our secretary there as well so that she could attach the minutes from PTRC in our minutes to the Board. Then everybody would know what's going on at PTRC.

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After some discussion, Attorney Johnston said we could add that on the agenda for the next meeting. Chairman Jefferies said okay. We'll postpone this with the vote until the next agenda or the next meeting.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

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

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:**

- a. October 21, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes
- b. Budget Amendment #3, accepting state funding for additional DSS funds for foster care emergency placements
- c. Grange Grant & Budget Amendment #4
- d. Budget Amendment #5, moving funds from Finance Office budget to County Manager's Budget to cover cost of Interim County Manager

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

**DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

There were no discussion items.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**ABC BOARD WORKING CAPITAL REQUEST:**

County Manager Paschal said I will introduce this item, and then if you have any additional questions we can turn it over to Michael Reagan, who's the Administrator for the Caswell ABC Board. The Caswell ABC Board stores are either owned by the ABC board or leased. The county doesn't own their property. The ABC Board is a legal entity that is separate from County Government. Their main relationship with us is that their ABC Stores generate revenue, and a portion of which is shared with Caswell County. That is explained in your memo. The Board also appoints their board members. So the ABC Board undergoes an annual audit; they're required to maintain a certain level of working capital every year. This year in 24 they are over their working capital maximum by \$47,294. There are tremendous capital needs in the ABC Stores. I listed just a few of them. Both of the stores they own were built in the 60s, and they have significant maintenance issues. The Yanceyville store floor is sinking and contains asbestos. The Semora store has a 2 inch drop where a wall used to be and has some exterior deterioration. They also have a 2000 Freightliner delivery truck that has 380,000 miles that's used to deliver product from the Yanceyville store to the other stores. The roof leaks whenever it rains, and the boxes inside get wet. So the Board has saved over the past few years approximately \$150,000 for capital improvements to address some of those needs. Unfortunately, as we all know

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construction inflation has been massive, and so now they're unable after they saved this money to complete the repairs because they're coming in above what they had estimated. They're asking the county if they can retain or keep the \$47,294 in order to help offset the cost of the delivery truck and to maybe make some progress towards the improvements that they need. I'll note a couple of things: the trucks estimated to cost \$67,250. That is a used truck with 100,000 miles on it. This request, if you allow them to keep the \$47,000, it won't impact future distributions. I looked at the revenue that we budgeted versus what the stores have generated and across the board in the last three years the revenue that we've gotten from the ABC store has exceeded what we budgeted. So if you have any additional questions, I will let Mr. Reagan address those.

Michael Regan came up and greeted the Board. They asked questions and the took action.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Rose and seconded by Commissioner Holt and **carried unanimously** to accept the request from the ABC Board to use the \$47, 294 for their capital needs. The motion was amended to approve the request from the ABC Board to use the \$47,294, that's above their capital maximum to be used for their truck as well as their floor in their building. (Ayes: Commissioners Rose, Gwynn, Holt, and Jefferies)

#### **BUDGET CALENDAR:**

County Manager Paschal said the next item is adoption of a budget calendar for preparation of the 25-26 budget. I think the budget process is one of the most important undertakings of County staff. The budget allocates resources, and in doing so sets out the plan of work for all departments. In other jurisdictions in which I've worked, the Board of Commissioners has adopted a budget calendar really at the beginning of the fiscal year to govern deadlines for preparation of the annual budget. The calendar helps the Manager, Finance Officer, as well as county departments plan their work. I've attached a recommended calendar. I will note that both the retreat and the work session dates can be changed if needed. The main change in this this calendar... Well the process has been used successfully in Chatham and Harnett, and it's made for a more transparent project as well as a better end product. A budget that's more transparent and meets the needs of the jurisdiction. The main change for the Board of Commissioners is that we are asking you to hold a budget planning to retreat in mid-January. We've included suggested dates, but they can be changed. In addition, the Board will receive the recommended budget at the first meeting in May giving more time for Board review. The main change for staff is we'll be preparing information for the retreat, holding meetings with department heads to review their budgets in detail, and provide a more detailed recommended budget to the Board. The main change for departments will be that we will request a lot more detail from them in justifying their requests. I will note that in the calendar the first set of dates through December 16th are italicized and that is because that's associated with a Capital Improvements Plan process. I wanted the county to have a road map for that. Obviously you know we can't undertake that in the current year. So the heads up document will also not be included in your retreat material as we're late getting into this process. I'll be glad to answer any questions.

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Commissioner Holt expressed his concern for the new Commissioners coming on board.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Holt and seconded by Commissioner Rose and **carried unanimously** to accept the Budget Calendar. (Ayes: Commissioners Rose, Gwynn, Holt, and Jefferies)

**APPROVAL OF AMENDMENT 3 TO GRANT ORDINANCE FOR THE CASWELL COUNTY AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021 AND APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENT # 2:**

County Manager Paschal said so originally Caswell County had set aside \$600,000 for broadband development in the county. Two of the grants that we had budgeted money, or one of the grants that we had budgeted \$250,000 in match, the contract was terminated by the vendor. Not by us. So that match went away. The last two contracts have only required matches of \$10,000 each, which is a far cry from the \$600,000. We have committed to the CAB Grant process, and it's really gone through all of the hoops. We committed a match of \$304,000 and change. However, there is a bill in the General Assembly. Actually the bill has already been approved by the General Assembly that would take away that match requirement. So the Governor's vetoed the bill, but they've set a vote I think it's November 17th to reconsider it. So it's very possible that the only match we'll have are those two \$10,000 amounts. Under the ARPA regulation, we have to obligate all of our money by December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, which that deadline is quickly approaching. We need to make sure that we don't lose this money. So what we're recommending through the contract amendment or the ordinance amendment and through the budget amendment is to move that money into the general fund. If it's needed for the CAB Grant, if that legislation doesn't pass, then we can always move it out. But if we don't move that money and it's in there for broadband and we haven't obligated or spent it, we will lose that money. What we're proposing to do is just use it to offset Public Safety salaries, which has the effect of just moving it into general fund balance. Do you have any questions?

Commissioner Holt asked about the intentions of the grant and County Manager Paschal and Deputy County Manager Williamson responded to the questions.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Holt and seconded by Commissioner Gwynn and **carried unanimously** to move the money. (Ayes: Commissioners Rose, Gwynn, Holt, and Jefferies)

**COUNTY MANAGER UPDATES:**

County Manager Paschal said so there are a few things that I want to bring to your attention. The first is my colleagues in Chatham County have developed an award-winning leadership program for their supervisors and other county staff. They are willing to come and provide a scaled down version of that leadership program free of charge to Caswell employees. It would be over the course of a year; it would be one day of instruction per month every other month. So it's not a great deal of commitment of time for employees. The second thing I want to bring to your attention is commissioner orientation. We are developing the orientation for the new Board, and we'll reach out to them as soon as we know the results of the election. We would like to include

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current board members in these sessions. It's a fairly robust orientation, and I think it would be helpful to existing members as well as new ones. It would also be, I think, helpful to have a mix of current board members and new board members in each session. Of course because of the open meetings law, we would have to have no more than three folks in the room at the same time. So I'll be reaching out to you after the election to try to schedule time. I would like to make a proposal, and you don't have to decide that tonight, but this is no reflection on Carla whatsoever. She has been told that she needs to do verbatim minutes of Commissioner meetings. That takes a tremendous amount of time to do, and it takes a tremendous amount of time as I'm looking through minutes to try to figure out what your actions were to find those actions. I'm accustomed to a summary of the discussion and the action. So it's very succinct and easy to find, and I'd ask you to consider that. I've talked with Carla and Russell as well about doing a new contracting process so that we have a repository for all of the contracts that the county has, and I think Carla's time would be better spent doing that contract database rather than verbatim minutes. The last thing I want to share is I've written a Manager's blog that I would like to post on the County's website and our Facebook page, and I'm going to ask Carla to do that tomorrow. I wrote this on my own time; I did not charge Caswell County for this. I do want to share a copy so that you're not surprised. Consensus was to post the blog.

#### **COUNTY ATTORNEY UPDATES:**

County Attorney Johnston said good evening Mr. Chairman. I don't have any updates during the open meeting, but we will have some updates and items of discussion in the Closed Session.

#### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

**Commissioner Rose:** Mr. Chairman, just a couple things. Just a reminder, as everybody is well aware, tomorrow's election day. If you have not voted, I would strongly encourage you to vote. That is the one thing that you can do to voice your opinion, and everybody has a right to vote. I think we have had extremely large turnout in early voting. The second thing I would have is just a reminder that there's going to be a Veterans Day Ceremony held on November the 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am at the Yanceyville Pavilion to honor all those who have served and who are serving. I would encourage anybody that can attend to do that, and thank them for their service. That's all I have Mr. Chairman.

**Commissioner Gwynn:** On Friday, I don't remember the time, but I think it's one o'clock at the Old Dillard school. They have open house. It's going to be an apartment style living for elderly adults and disabled adults to some degree, but they must be able to care for themselves. I've been to one in Wilmington very similar to this. They are going to be one bedrooms or two bedrooms with a kitchenette, a living room, bedroom, and bath. They will need to do for themselves, and the one I visited in Wilmington, most of them had their own cars. They drove wherever they want to go. I'm not so sure, but I'm hearing that it's going to be the same type of thing at Dillard. It is open house on the 8th.

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**ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- November 11, 2024 County Offices closed for Veterans Day
- November 18, 2024 Board of Commissioners Meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Historic Courthouse
- November 21, 2024 Joint Town Meeting at 6 pm at the Yanceyville Municipal Building
- November 28 and 29, 2024 County Offices closed for Thanksgiving

**CLOSED SESSION:**

A motion was made at 7:04 pm by Commissioner Gwynn, and seconded by Commissioner Holt 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). (Ayes: Commissioners Rose, Holt, Gwynn, and Jefferies)

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A **motion** was made at 7:44 pm by Commissioner Gwynn and seconded by Commissioner Holt and **carried unanimously** to adjourn the meeting. (Ayes: Commissioners Rose, Holt, Gwynn, and Jefferies)

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Carla R. Smith  
Clerk to the Board

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Jeremiah Jefferies  
Chairman

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