MINUTES – DECEMBER 21, 2020

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, December 21, 2020. The meeting was held electronically using Zoom Webinar software. Members present: David J. Owen, Chairman, Jeremiah Jefferies, Vice Chairman, William E. Carter, John D. Dickerson, Nathaniel Hall, Rick McVey, Steve Oestreicher. Also, present: Bryan Miller, County Manager, Brian Ferrell, County Attorney, and Debra Ferrell representing The Caswell Messenger. Paula P. Seamster, Clerk to the Board, recorded the minutes.

WELCOME

MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

Chairman Owen stated “Before we get into the meeting I want to take this opportunity to wish our fellow Board members, our staff, our employees, and all the residents of Caswell County a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. It’s been quite different from what we expected and my prayer for you is that this time will be filled with both peace and joy. Do the best you can, stay safe and a Merry Christmas to all of you.”

Chairman Owen opened the meeting with a moment of Silent Prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board of Commissioners and all the guests in the attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

INTRODUCTION OF NCDOT NEW DIVISION ENGINEER, MR. WRIGHT ARCHER

Chairman Owen introduced Mr. Michael Fox, Chairman of the Board of Division 7 of the NC DOT and Mr. Jason Julian, District Engineer.

Mr. Michael Fox thanked the Board for inviting him and he added that he is the Board of Transportation member representing Division 7 which is Caswell, Alamance, Orange, Rockingham, and Guilford Counties. He stated that he is also Chairman of the Board of Transportation. Mr. Fox stated that he was about 60 out from being a property owner in Caswell County and added that he has been a fan of Caswell County for many years. He stated that he has hunted and fished and spent a lot of time in Caswell County over the years. Mr. Fox stated that he thought Caswell was one of the most beautiful counties in the state and that it is a real treasure for North Carolina to have and he was happy to be a part of the community in the near future. Mr. Fox stated that he and Jason Julian were pleased to introduce the new division engineer Mr. Wright Archer which has replaced Mr. Mike Mills which was an employee of the NC DOT for 44 years. He thanked Mr. Mills for his many years of service and wished him well with his well-deserved retirement. Mr. Fox stated that NC DOT was glad to have Mr. Wright Archer to step into this role. He added that Mr. Archer has been with NC DOT for a lot of years as well and Mr. Archer is a native of Division 7. Mr. Fox stated that Mr. Archer also enjoys hunting in Caswell and knows Caswell County well. He stated that Mr. Archer is a NC State and NC A&T graduate.

Mr. Jason Julian stated that it was great to be a part of Rockingham and Caswell Counties and has enjoyed working with many of the commissioners and Ms. Seamster. He added that he is at the Board’s disposal and that Mr. Bryan Miller had his number. Mr. Julian agreed with Chairman Fox that Caswell County is beautiful, and he loves coming to Caswell to get away from the traffic and hustle and bustle and he turned it back over to Chairman Fox. Mr. Fox stated that NC DOT is looking forward into the future with the casino coming into Danville, Va. and the traffic that will pick up in Caswell along certain routes and are looking into improvements plans so it will not become a burden to Caswell County.

Mr. Wright Archer thanked the Board for allowing NC DOT to be on the agenda today. He added that he is very familiar with Caswell County and grew up hunting on the game lands and has some lifelong friends in the area. Mr. Archer stated that Mr. Mike Mills had a long career with DOT, and he know they are big shoes to fill and added that he started with the DOT 30 years ago. He stated that he thought he impressed Mr. Julian when they came to Caswell and he knew the roads. Mr. Archer stated that he was very big on communication and partnering and working together and he wanted to continue Mr. Mills’ legacy. He stated that he looked forward to meeting the Board face to face.

(At 9:12 a.m. Commissioner Carter joined the meeting.)

Mr. Fox stated that they would be happy to answer any questions the Board may have or if the Board wanted to raise any concerns in the county. He suggested that the NC DOT come to at least one Board meeting to give updates and to give the Board a chance to ask DOT questions.

Commissioner Jefferies asked if the DOT was going to widen Highway 86 to a four-lane road from Efland to the Virginia state line. Mr. Fox asked Mr. Julian to address this question. Mr. Julian responded that this has been identified and discussed as a future project, but he was not aware that this project had been placed on the TIP to four lane Highway 86S all the way to Virginia. He added that he did know that US 29 is getting resurfaced in 2021 and NC 700 from Rockingham County to the Welcome Center is getting resurfaced in 2021 as well as some of the secondary roads will be tarred and graveled. Mr. Julian informed Commissioner Jefferies that the DOT would investigate widening 86.

Mr. Fox stated that it was an opportune time with the casino coming into Virginia for DOT to submit this as a project and to make sure to get the data on the anticipated volume the casino will be drawing to see how it will score.

Chairman Owen stated that the 3 lane project for 86 was scheduled to start in 2020 but has been pushed back to 2022 or 2024 and he requested that this project be pushed back up with the casino coming to Danville. Mr. Fox responded that the DOT would look at getting it back on the schedule based on traffic projections.

Commissioner Carter stated that he was glad to hear that Highway 29 was going to be resurfaced. He stated that last year he had a lot of complaints about the mowing on the sides of the roads and wanted to know if it was going to be better this year. Mr. Fox responded that DOT had some financial challenges due to the hurricane in 2018, lawsuits on the loops being built cost $750 million in 2019 and 2020, and finally COVID with everyone saying home revenues dropped by about $350 million so this slowed down roadside maintenance. He stated that the DOT is back in good financial shape and have given the authority to start this maintenance again.

Commissioner Hall stated that a few years back there was some discussion about upgrading Highway 119 from I-40 to Virginia and he wanted to know the status on this. Mr. Fox responded that DOT is working on the 119 bypass in Alamance County but he was not aware of any current projects to extend this any further and asked Mr. Julian and Mr. Archer if they were aware. Mr. Archer responded that he was not aware of this. Commissioner Hall stated that maybe the Board was misled but he thought that once Highway 119 was complete in Alamance County it would be upgraded from Mebane to 360 in Virginia. Mr. Fox stated that this could be checked on. Commissioner Hall stated that the other observation was on Highway 158 from Rockingham County to Yanceyville then to Highway 86 and head East towards Hillsborough there was a loop and circle. He stated about 2 or 3 years ago the DOT came in and took out the loop and circle and installed a stop sign where traffic had to make a complete stop. Commissioner Hall stated that this may have been for some good reasons but when tractor trailers make this stop it is difficult for them to make the left turn to go east which slows traffic down. Mr. Fox responded that statewide 158 has been a continuing project for the last 25 years. He stated that he would have Mr. Julian and Mr. Archer to check into why this changed. Mr. Julian stated that he assumed the Traffic Serviced performed a study and decided that this needed to be done. Mr. Fox stated that the DOT would look at that and have Mr. Julian to get back with the Board on the status if there is a plan to improve that or how to start a plan.

Chairman Owen thanked Mr. Fox, Mr. Julian, and Mr. Archer. He stated that he would work with the county manager to get them back on the agenda in April.

PUBLIC HEARING – UP TO 6-MONTH EXTENSION ON THE MORATORIUM

Chairman Owen stated that the public hearing will be done a little bit different, he had spoken with legal counsel about the statutes that are required for virtual meetings. He stated if there are no objections from the Board, he would open the public hearing on the Up to 6-Month Extension on the Moratorium. There were no objections from the Board. Chairman Owen declared the public hearing on the Up to 6-Month Extension on the Moratorium open and asked the clerk to read the public comments.

The clerk read the public comments that were received for the public hearing:

“Pat Warren, 36 Main Street, Prospect Hill. Considering the environmental health of Caswell County and in light of looking into enacting a zoning ordinance for southeastern Caswell, I am respectfully requesting that the Moratorium on Polluting Industries be extended for 6 months. Thank you for your consideration.”

“Gay Gasper Pleasant, 1268 Painter Road, Prospect Hill. Dear Commissioners: Please continue to work on implementing effective land use protection measures for Caswell County property owners, including badly needed zoning regulations, an extended moratorium on new industrial development, and passage of the HIDO with no further changes to land spacing requirements. Thank you.”

“Phil Barfield, 910 Melvin Wrenn Road, Yanceyville. I am in favor of a 6-month extension of the current moratorium due to the COVID-19 pandemic disruption of the schedule and necessary steps that were not accomplished this year. Please take this additional time to protect the health of the citizens in Caswell County from polluting industries by implementing additional standards and conditions in the Unified Development Ordinance, passing the high impact development ordinance, and adopting effective zoning regulations. Thank you.”

Chairman Owen stated with no further public comments he declared the public hearing closed and written public comments can still be received for the next 24 hours and will added to the public records for the public hearing. He asked legal counsel to inform the Board on the next step in the process for the moratorium.

Mr. Ferrell stated that the next process in the process should the Board decide to proceed with the consideration of the extension would be the adoption of an ordinance amending the current moratorium by extending it for 6 months. He stated that he had begun the process of drafting the ordinance and it will be back before the Board at its first meeting in January which would be prior to the January 6th expiration of the current one year moratorium. Mr. Ferrell informed the Board that the four items that the statute requires to be included in the ordinance need to describe the problem that the county is trying to address during the period of the moratorium and a statement of actions to remedy those problems have to be developed as well during the extension. He stated that he understood that the commissioners were considering extending the moratorium for the purposes of developing a zoning ordinance for certain townships within the county that had a majority vote in the affirmative for the zoning concept on the referendum and those townships are Yanceyville, Anderson, Hightowers, and Leasburg. Mr. Ferrell stated that the Board voted at its last meeting not to consider countywide zoning the moratorium that currently applied to the entire county would not be extended to all of Caswell County because the Board was only considering certain areas so the moratorium extension will only apply to those areas interested in zoning. He asked the Board to confirm that his understanding was correct so he could draft the ordinance accordingly. Chairman Owen responded that this was the intent of the Board. Commissioner Oestreicher concurred.

Commissioner Hall stated that he understood that this was the intent of the Board, but he hoped the Board would reconsider. He stated that the casino is coming to Danville and things will change in the northern part of Caswell and all of the economic development in that area may not be favorable so he hoped the Board would reconsider 3 to 5 years down the road in the northern part of the county.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked Mr. Ferrell how difficult it would be to include revisiting expanding zoning to the northern part of the county based on Commissioner Hall’s comments. Mr. Ferrell responded that if the Board wanted to consider this it could be drafted that way and added that the HIDO would provide some level of protection.

Chairman Owen stated that from what he understood it was the intent of the Board to only zoned the southeastern part of the county and added that another consensus could be taken. Commissioner Oestreicher responded that he would like for the Board to consider zoning the northern part of the county. Chairman Owen reminded the Board that it needed to pass the moratorium at the next meeting.

Chairman Owen asked the Board for a consensus to consider zoning in the northern part of the county considering the coming of the casino to Danville, Va. Commissioner Carter responded no because that district voted no on the referendum. Commissioner Dickerson responded no and added that he did not think the southern end should be zoned because the voters spoke loud and clear and the Board is not considering the residents that do not want zoning. He stated that 54% voted for it but he wanted to know about the 46% that did not want zoning. Commissioner Hall responded yes because something needed to be done for the entire county. Commissioner Jefferies responded no and added that it has been on the referendum two or three times and the residents said no. Commissioner McVey responded no. Commissioner Oestreicher responded yes. Chairman Owen responded no.

Chairman Owen informed Mr. Ferrell that the moratorium will only cover the southeast corner of the county that were mentioned earlier. Mr. Ferrell responded that he would have an ordinance in from the Board at its first meeting in January.

Chairman Owen declared the public hearing closed, public comments can still be submitted for the next 24 hours and will be included in the public record of the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING – NORTH CAROLINA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PROGRAM

Chairman Owen opened the public hearing for the North Carolina Community Development Block Grant Program and turned it over to the county manager for a brief explanation on the grant program.

Mr. Miller stated that Caswell County had applied for a CDBG/CB funds to provide much needed wide area of public services to low and moderate income families which will consist of rental and utility payment assistance, child care assistance, assistance with Public Health with assisting with mobile testing of vaccinations in communities. He stated that Caswell County will partner with a non-profit organization to assist the business community affected by COVID-19. Mr. Miller stated that the mobile service would provide wireless broadband access to those needing access to apply for jobs or to conduct schoolwork. He stated that the Department of Public Health will also add a shelter to the front of the health department to provide shelter for those coming to the health department to get tested or vaccinated. Mr. Miller stated that the grant application is for $900,000 - $90,000 will be for administration, $150,000 for a mobile medical clinic, the portico shell at the health department will be approximately $80,000, $100,000 in rental assistance ($750 per individual), $100,000 in utility assistance ($200 per individual), $100,000 in child care assistance ($850 per individual), and $280,000 for small business assistance.

The clerk reported that there were no public comments received on this public hearing.

Chairman Owen declared the public hearing closed, public comments can still be submitted for the next 24 hours and will be included in the public record of the public hearing.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The clerk read the public comments received:

“WYNC. Thank you for allowing the motion for the relocation of the monuments on the Square to be added to the agenda of The BoCC.”

“Donna and Tom Nicholais, Goose Creek Road, Prospect Hill. Please pass the HIDO, with no further changes or reductions to land use spacing.”

“Heather Langan, 1077 Wilson Road, Hurdle Mills. Please pass the HIDO with no further changes to land use spacing or operation setbacks! Thank you.”

“My name is Mark Langan and I live at 1077 Wilson Road, Hurdle Mills. Please pass the HIDO during your Monday, December 21 meeting, I support the current land use spacing, operation setback and other size and setback values in the HIDO. Please pass with no further changes or reductions.”

“Mark and Amy Salvestrin, 333 Ridgeville Road, Prospect Hill. We support and are hoping HIDO passes. Thank you and Merry Christmas.”

“Rev. Bryon Shoffner, 150 Shoffners Lane, Burlington. Hello Commissioners, I ask for you all to approve the HIDO because of the following reasons: 1). You all have the unique opportunity at this very moment to protect the residents of Caswell County by approving the HIDO with the land use spacing being as written or by making it larger. I say larger because the pollutant industries do not care about the people’s health or the cumulative impacts (heart disease, Cancer, COPD, Respiratory diseases, PTSD, Crones disease, Terete disease, etc.). 2). Just like you all have an unique opportunity to make a difference so did the Anderson Community. When the community realized that these pollutant industries was going to be as close as 250 feet from my neighbor’s house and 1600 feet from my house and others they stood together and fought hard. Even though some may not understand why this HIDO is so important let me share this with you: these pollutant industries always build in the majority black neighborhoods because they normally receive the least amount of resistance because they are not protected. Well Commissioners Protect the sick, Protect the Poor, Protect the Elderly, Protect Human life. Before I go to the third point commissioners can someone let the people know how this pollutant industry managed to get a storm water permit without issuing any notice to the people of Caswell county. Especially to the residents of Anderson community. We need answers, not excuses, we need protecting not blind eyes, we need clean water and air not contaminations (Clean Water Act and Subchapter 02H). 3). There is a few things that hopefully will get added to the HIDO when a solution can be found:

a). The issue with PFAS- if there is a chemical fire because of the pollutant, how will it be handled. Will you let the fire burn out and kill the residents because of the fumes in the air or will you use the foam which contains PFAS and kill the residents that way. My next issue which is: does the Fire fighters know that they open themselves up stickler Cancer once they utilize this foam to put out a chemical fire. Riddle me this before I move on to the next quick point is the County able to put out a chemical fire or are you going to have the residents in a one mile radius stay in the house if a chemical fire happens. Oh, by the way means they will die from chemicals which will seep through the vents of their homes. 4). It would be great if the county would somehow come up with a solution to protect the water in the rural areas of the county. Majority of Caswell County is on well water and we all know that our wells will need to be protected, but not only protect but create an action plan that will maintain the residents well-being (hotel, Shower, food accommodations) if their well happens to become damaged because of a pollutant industry. Lastly thank you for the opportunity to be on the HIDO Committee and remember a lot of research and time went into creating the HIDO as well as making sure that our personal feelings or agendas were removed in order to protect each and every last resident that calls Caswell County home. God Bless you and remember to pray before you make a decision.”

“Jami and Barry Haigler, 249 Blaylock Drive, Prospect Hill. Please pass the HIDO without further changes or reductions to the land use spacing. Thank you for your time.”

“Mimi Logothetis, 9501 NC Highway 86N, Cedar Grove. I am writing this morning to express my continued support and hope that you pass the HIDO as written with no further changes or reductions to land use spacing. I am appreciative of the work that has been done to arrive at all the parameters. This will be a strong move forward in protecting our investments in our property and environmental health going forward. I also support the extension of the moratorium, so please vote YES on the 6-month extension. Thank you for the consideration and ongoing work.”

“Pat Warren, 36 Main Street, Prospect Hill. I am respectfully requesting that the HIDO be passed today with no further revisions. Thank you for your consideration.”

“Ed and Sharon Williams, 396 John Russell Road, Prospect Hill. We are requesting that you pass the HIDO with no further changes or reductions to land use spacing. Thank you for your continued support. Healthy holidays.”

“Beverly Hughes. Please don’t allow this company in Caswell County. We don’t want or need it. Save our quiet and peaceful community. We like our homes where children can play and have clean air and water.”

“Karen Tate Gray, 948 Union Ridge Road, Burlington, Anderson Community. I would, again, like to express my support for passing and implementing the HIDO in our county. This would be one step in helping protect our county and its citizens from polluting industries or certain businesses that may move into our county. I am asking that you vote yes to enact the HIDO without any more reductions in setbacks or land use spacing. Now is the time to protect our county for future generations. Thank you.”

“Scott and Vonda Oakley, 1425 Baynes Road. Please protect the citizens of Caswell County by voting to pass the HIDO today without any further changes or reductions to the Land Use Table or Table of Classifications. Once passed please ensure the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality and its agency divisions are notified and receive a copy of the HIDO.”

“Anita Foust, 2501 Hughes Mill Road. I re-sent my previous comments for them to be added to the official public record along with this public comment. Setbacks. Whenever the asphalt plants catch on fire, residents in a one-mile radius are told to evacuate or stay indoors. Isn’t that a HUGE hint that an asphalt plant should not be located closer than one mile from residents? So, what is your logic for reducing the setbacks on the HIDO? It cannot possibly be to save the lives of residents. Wastewater Permit. Please explain why the public was not informed of the water permits prior to their issuance? Certainly, the Caswell Commissioners have already asked that question of the proper authorities and have answer for their constituents. You are the residents first line of protection. Please protect us. Thank you.”

“My name is Kim Steffan, and I live at 3598 Corbett Ridge Road, Mebane, in Caswell County. I am writing to ask the Commissioners to vote unanimously to adopt the HIDO in its current form today, without any additional changes, and without delay. This Ordinance in its current form is the result of a great deal of work and research. It meets a critical and urgent need for our County. Thank you.”

“This is Jennifer and John Connor at 1321 Vinson Road, Burlington. We are asking that you please pass the HIDO with no further changes or reductions to land use spacing. Thank you so much for serving the people of this county.”

“This is Sylvia and Homer Saunders at 386 Vinson Road, Burlington. We are asking that you please pass the HIDO with no further changes or reductions to land use spacing. Thank you so much for serving the people of this county.”

“Brenda R. Brown, 203 King Road, Yanceyville. I want to express my concerns for our beautiful Caswell County and to support all efforts being made to safeguard its future. Thank you.”

“Elizabeth Norman, 1811 Wilson Road, Hurdle Mills. In light of the many well-reasoned thoughts about our need for protection we are hoping you will pass the HIDO tomorrow. In addition, please support NOT decreasing the spacing requirements- they are minimal at best as they are! Thanks for your support and consideration in caring for our land.”

“Rebecca Page. Please pass the HIDO at the Dec. 21 meeting without further revisions to the set back distances. It’s imperative that this ordinance be passed before the moratorium expires.”

“Tim Yarbrough, Cooper Cemetery Road, Prospect Hill. Thank you for taking the time to listen to my comments. I was able to watch the commissioners meeting last Monday. During this meeting it was decided to not proceed with countywide zoning; and I want to thank you for that decision. The voters of Caswell County spoke loud and clear during the November election and said that they were opposed to zoning. The commissioners did agree however to study the idea of conditional zoning or zoning certain areas of the county. I totally disagree with this decision. The question on the ballot was "Are you in favor of zoning for Caswell County?". It was not "Are you in favor of zoning certain areas of Caswell County?". It has been said that the results would have been the same if the alternative question had been on the ballot. However, there is no way to know, with any degree of certainty, that this would have actually been the case. Someone that voted in favor of zoning may not have done so if they thought some portions of the county would be free of zoning. If this board decides to implement partial zoning or conditional zoning, I believed that the zoned areas will be at an economic disadvantage compared to un-zoned areas of the county. I've always heard it said that Caswell County needs industry to help with the tax burden and to provide jobs; so please don't add more regulations, that may prevent businesses from coming to this county. If, you as a board, decide to implement partial zoning; I believe that you will be going against the will of the people.  As we all know, elections have consequences, and so do the decisions that this board makes. Thank You.”

“Phil Barfield, 910 Melvin Wrenn Road, Yanceyville. Please pass the high impact development ordinance that is before you with no further reductions to the land use spacing. Thank you for your work and support on this ordinance.”

“Charles and Kim McLamb, 3628 Ridgeville Road, Prospect Hill. Once again, we ask you to take careful consideration in your vote on the HIDO and to please pass this without any further changes or reductions! Please protect our county and its residents from unwanted harmful industry!! We thank you for doing the job you have been elected by the RESIDENTS of Caswell County to do…and NOT the bidding of big business who only wish to DESTROY our county in order to further their profits!!. Thank you.”

Dr. Martinelli. Pass HIDO without any further modifications!”

Chairman Owen stated that with no further public comments he declared Public Comments closed.

RECOGNITIONS

Chairman Owen stated “Gentlemen as Chair I take a little liberty here, as you know we were unable to do our Appreciation Banquet for our employees and I thought it was important that we recognize publicly our employees who have already retired here or will be retiring so I just want call out their names and thank them for their service and their dedication to the residents of Caswell County. Angy Turner from Section 8 Housing, Babby Wiley from Home Health, Kayre Watson from DSS, Joyce Rainey from Transportation, Mabel Gunter from the Detention Center, Gwen Vaughn from Finance, Captain Eugene Riddick from the Sheriff’s Department, Sergeant Cynthia Williamson from the Sheriff’s Department, Sergeant Wesley Harrington from the Sheriff’s Department, and Mary Harrelson from DSS. Once again this Board thanks you again for your service to Caswell County and we wish you great blessings upon your future endeavors and hope you are not through helping Caswell become a better place, thank you.”

Commissioner Oestreicher stated “I’d like to recognize the HIDO, the High Impact Development Ordinance Committee for their hard work specifically Reverend Bryon Shoffner who represented the voice of the people, Kim Steffan who represented the voice of reason, Bryan Miller and Matthew Hoagland who represented the voice of the County and the county ordinances, David Owen who represented the County Commissioners, and especially Scott Oakley who is the voice of logic, data, and certainly the beacon and barrier of the hard work that went into the development of the HIDO and I don’t have enough nice things to go along with how hard they worked on this, how reasonable they were, and they did develop a quality product after at least a dozen meetings, I believe, and hours and hours and hours of hard work and consideration so thank you to the HIDO development committee for the great work.”

ACTION ITEMS

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Miller asked the Board to add a Closed Session to the agenda for personnel (NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6)).

Commissioner McVey moved, seconded by Commissioner Oestreicher to approve the agenda as amended. After a roll call vote the motion carried unanimously. (Commissioners Carter, Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher and Owen voted in favor.)

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Jefferies moved, seconded by Commissioner McVey to approve the consent agenda.

The following items were included on the Consent Agenda:

A. Minutes of November 30, 2020 (2) Special Meeting

B. Minutes of December 7, 2020 Regular Meeting

C. FY 2020-2021 Budget Amendment #3

D. FY 2020-2021 Budget Amendment #4

RECESS

The Board took a brief recess due to technical difficulties. Commissioner Carter could not be heard.

After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. (Commissioners Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher, and Owen voted in favor.)

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS & COMMITTEES FOR COMMISSIONERS

Chairman Owen asked the Commissioners if they were satisfied with their appointments.

Commissioner McVey stated that he would like to keep the Recreation Commission, Farmer Lake Board, and the Economic Development Board and asked if another Commissioner would take over the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council and PTRC Work Force Board. He added that he had taken on these boards when Commissioner Sterling Carter was on the Board. Chairman Owen responded that he thought the 2 boards that Commissioner McVey wanted to give to another commissioner met quarterly and asked if any of the Commissioners were interested in the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council and PTRC Work Force Board.

Commissioner Hall volunteered to take the PTRC Work Force Board.

Commissioner Dickerson asked when the Economic Development Board meet. Commissioner McVey responded that it met once a month, but he was going to keep this board. Commissioner Dickerson apologized and added that he misunderstood what Commissioner McVey said. Commissioner McVey responded that the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council is the only one left.

Chairman Owen stated that at this time he would take the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council until someone else is interested.

Chairman Owen asked the Commissioners if there were any other issues.

Commissioner Carter stated that at one time Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he would take the Planning Board and he asked if he could take the Library Board back. He stated that when Commissioner Sterling Carter was on the Board, he asked Commissioner Carter to switch the Planning Board and the Library Board. Commissioner Carter asked Commissioner Dickerson if he could have the Library Board back. Commissioner Dickerson responded that Commissioner Carter could have the Library Board back.

Chairman Owen asked if there were any other problems or issues with the Boards and Committees.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked for the Boards and Committees to be updated and given back to the Board. Chairman Owen responded that the clerk would get the Boards and Committees updated and get the updated list in the next agenda package.

Chairman Owen called for a roll call vote to approve the Boards and Committees. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. (Commissioners Carter, Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher and Owen voted in favor.)

APPROVAL OF AMENDMENTS TO THE RESTATEMENT OF ARTICLE III, CHAPTER 14, OF THE CASWELL COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA CODE OF ORDINANCES – (HIGH IMPACT DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE – HIDO)

Chairman Owen stated that he needed a motion to approve.

Commissioner Oestreicher stated “I would like to make a motion to approve the HIDO with the following two changes which may or may not be included already. One Mr. Oakley has prepared a revised flow chart that reflects the changes that were put in there by Mr. Ferrell, my understanding is it makes it consistent and also the end for paragraph #2 Table 14-68 where one was for 60 days.” Chairman Owen responded “Just for clarification, in your agenda package, the items that were written in blue are those that will be changed to the new language. That is being done or has been done. Generally, wordsmith issues is just how it is worded, and I am not sure if what you just spoke about has been taken care of, but we can approve those changes as well.” Commissioner McVey stated, “It has been changed.” Chairman Owen responded “That should be in there as well. The changes that we had in our special meeting are included in this.”

Chairman Owen asked if there were any other questions or comment and if not, he needed a motion to approve.

Commissioner Oestreicher moved, seconded by Commissioner McVey to approve. After a roll call vote, the motion carried by a vote of six to one. (Commissioners Carter, Dickerson, Hall, McVey, Oestreicher and Owen voted in favor. Commissioner Jefferies voted against.)

Mr. Ferrell stated “Mr. Chairman before you leave that item I’ll ask you to just address one more motion and this is a technical motion required by statute and it’s a zoning consistency statement to just certify what the Board finds that the ordinance is consistent with the County’s comprehensive plan and I will just read the motion or read the language and if somebody sees fit to move its approval we can move on to the next item. Here is the proposed motion, in approving the High Impact Development Ordinance the Caswell County Board of Commissioners finds that it is consistent with our County’s Comprehensive Plan through guiding the economic development of new industries and through promoting the health and wellness of the strong environmental safeguards and through protecting agriculture by ensuring a rural landscape throughout the County. The passage of this ordinance is in the public interest because it reasonably balances job growth, economic development, natural preservation, and the rural lifestyle that we all value as Caswell County residents.”

Commissioner Oestreicher moved, seconded by Commissioner Hall that in approving the High Impact Development Ordinance the Caswell County Board of Commissioners finds that it is consistent with our County’s Comprehensive Plan through guiding the economic development of new industries and through promoting the health and wellness of the strong environmental safeguards and through protecting agriculture by ensuring a rural landscape throughout the County. The passage of this ordinance is in the public interest because it reasonably balances job growth, economic development, natural preservation, and the rural lifestyle that we all value as Caswell County residents. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. (Commissioners Carter, Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher and Owen voted in favor.)

TELAMON CORPORATION’S PROJECT PRIDE SUBMISSION OF FY 2021-2022 COMMUNITY SERVICE BLOCK GRANT (CSBG) APPLICATION

Ms. Shatarra Williams stated that she was the Program Coordinator for CSBG grants at Telamon and they are submitting their application for review for the program year 2021-2022 and the available funding is $320,267. She added that per county Caswell is allocated $45,889, Person is $72,740, and Rockingham is $201,638. Ms. Williams stated that the allocations were based on population. She stated that in addition to these funds the program Project PRIDE has CARES money to help Caswell, Person, and Rockingham Counties residents who are affected by the pandemic in the amount of roughly $395,000. Ms. Williams stated that this will help individuals who are at the 200% and below the poverty line and these services are for employment and education. She stated that they meet people by appointment only.

Chairman Owen asked the Board if there were any questions. He stated that there was no action needed because it was just a review. Chairman Owen thanked Ms. Williams for the information. Ms. Williams responded wished the Board and the clerk Happy Holidays and added that Ms. Seamster was always super helpful to Telamon.

DATE FOR COMMISSIONERS PLANNING WORK SESSION

Chairman Owen asked the Commissioners for dates in the later part of January for this work session so that Staff would have enough time to put information together that is requested. He added that this meeting will last 4 hours and if this is not enough time another special meeting could be held later.

Commissioner Oestreicher suggested Wednesday, January 20, 2021 at 9:00 a.m.

Chairman Owen asked if there were any issues with Wednesday, January 20th at 9:00 a.m. There were no objections. Chairman Owen stated that the Planning Work Session would be held on January 20th from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and the location will be given out later. He reminded the Commissioners to email their topics to the clerk and himself and once these are received the county manager and himself will review the topics to make the agenda for the planning work session.

MINUTES APPROVAL PROCESS

Chairman Owen informed the Board that there is no statute that requires a vote on Minutes, and it is not in the Board’s rules. He stated that the reason that he brought this up was due to the virtual meetings and the requirement for roll call voting the Board is spending a lot of time on roll call voting. Chairman Owen stated that it will be under the Action Items but he will ask the Board if there are any corrections to the Minutes and if there are no correction he will state that the Minutes stand approved. He asked if there was any disagreement with this process.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked if there was a public information request for the Minutes would the Minutes have to be approved by the Board before that request can be granted. Chairman Owen responded no they do not need to be approved before the request can be granted and added that he checked on this with the county manager. Mr. Miller added that this was correct and added that as soon as the Minutes are complete, they can be provided to anyone through a public records request because at this time it would become a public document. The clerk stated that even handwritten minutes are considered a public document and those handwritten minutes can be requested as soon as the meeting is over. Commissioner Oestreicher responded okay.

Chairman Owen stated that if there are no objections the Minutes will proceed by this process.

SCHOOL BOARD PANDEMIC DISCUSSION

Commissioner Hall stated that he had been advised that the Board had not received any information as requested from the School Board so he did not think the Board could move forward with any discussion until responses are received. Chairman Owen responded that the Board would hold off on this until information is received from the School Board.

Mr. Miller stated that the thought this information should be received by the next Board meeting so this could be added to the next agenda if it pleases Commissioner Hall. Commissioner Hall responded that this would be fine.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Ms. Jennifer Eastwood, Health Director, informed the Board that the County’s current case county is 1,031 with 106 people in isolation and the positivity rate today is 12.4%. She stated that testing sites have been extremely busy, and the County has a few outbreaks, one is at the Caswell Correction facility. Ms. Eastwood stated that the outbreak at the Caswell Correction facility had been closed out months ago but there is another outbreak with about 40 offenders as well as a couple staff members. She stated that there are also a couple of group homes that have outbreaks right now. Ms. Eastwood stated that today is a historic day because about an hour ago they received their first shipment of the vaccine, the Maderna vaccine, and the 1a population will start receiving the vaccine this week and next week. She shared the framework of those that would be able to get the vaccine first. (See below)



Ms. Eastwood stated that one way to get herd immunity is to get vaccinated. She stated that the Health Department received the Maderna vaccine which is a two-dose vaccine, and the vaccinations are 28 days apart. Ms. Eastwood stated that this is an added task for her staff. She stated that her staff has worked incredibly hard since March and their Christmas break will not be taken away to vaccinate.

Chairman Owen thanked Ms. Eastwood and her staff for the work they do for Caswell County. He asked Ms. Eastwood if she could email the distribution plan to each commissioner. Ms. Eastwood responded that she would email it to the clerk and then the clerk can email it out to the commissioners. Chairman Owen stated that this would be fine.

Commissioner Carter thanked Ms. Eastwood for what she and her staff does. He stated that he thought he fell in the 1a group and wanted to know what he needed to do to get vaccinated. Ms. Eastwood responded that she thought Commissioner Carter would be in the 1b group but she asked him to call the Health Department to get his name added to the list so they could call him when the vaccines come in.

Commissioner McVey asked Ms. Eastwood where the volunteer fire departments fit in the distribution framework. Ms. Eastwood responded that it was her understanding that the volunteer fire departments would fall in the 1b group.

Commissioner Oestreicher thanked Ms. Eastwood and her staff for everything they do. He asked if Ms. Eastwood could also email with the distribution table what the qualifying conditions are to get the vaccine. Ms. Eastwood responded that she would.

Chairman Owen asked Ms. Eastwood if there were statistics to show the different age groups as far as the transmission of the virus. He asked if she had this information to email it to the clerk or to himself. Ms. Eastwood responded that she did track that locally, but it is located on the DHHS website and that would be the best place to find that information. Chairman Owen stated that he would get that information through the website. Ms. Eastwood responded that the virus is widespread and added that there was no hotspot in the county because the virus is everywhere. She stated that the virus was hitting all age groups but the 18 and under group has the least transmission. Ms. Eastwood asked that everyone be mindful when gathering with friends and family.

COUNTY MANAGER’S UPDATES

CARES Act Spending Summary

Mr. Miller informed the Board that the County’s CARES Act Spending Plan needed to be revised to include additional allocations for employees’ salaries. He stated that the revision would be approved at a special meeting scheduled for Tuesday, December 29th at 9:00 a.m.

Chairman Owen stated that the plan is to call a special meeting on Tuesday, December 29th at 9:00 a.m.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked if the meeting would be conducted via Zoom. Chairman Owen responded yes, the meeting would be conducted virtually and should not last more than 30 to 45 minutes.

Utilities Assistance Program

Mr. Miller informed the Board that a few weeks the Board discussed a Payment Assistant Plan that the county was handling through the Caswell Fund. He thanked the members of the Caswell Fund for being very diligent and added that they have done an excellent job. Mr. Miller stated that Jeannine Everidge from the Senior Center and Paula Seamster have done an excellent job implementing this program. He stated that the Caswell Fund had spent all the CARES Act money that the county provided for payment assistance. Mr. Miller stated that there is still money available that was provided by Duke Energy. He added that the Town of Milton provided the Caswell Fund some funding for the Town of Milton residents and some of those funds are still available. Mr. Miller stated that since all of the CARES Act money had not been spent, he planned to get with Ms. Jennifer Eastwood to see if additional money could be given to the Caswell Fund to help further with the payment assistance program.

High Impact Development Ordinance (HIDO) Clarification

Mr. Miller stated that he needed to clarify something for the Board, he thought the Board was clear on it, but he wanted to clarify it for the public. He stated that it seemed as though by the public comments that were read that the HIDO would stop any current developments that are permitted but he wanted everyone to be aware that the HIDO because of permit choice would not apply to any current projects or any past projects unless they choose to expand those projects. Mr. Miller stated that this is state statute and there is nothing that the county can do about that but the HIDO would apply to future projects. He asked if the county attorney had anything to add.

Mr. Ferrell stated that what the county manager stated is consistent with state law. He added that the HIDO would apply to project moving forward and the projects in the works will have the statutory construct that was in place when those projects first applied for permits.

Broadband

Mr. Miller informed the Board that there have been a lot of things occurring with broadband as far as the county is concerned. He added that he was continuing to monitor all the applications that have been sent in on Caswell’s behalf and to monitor the process being made through the project.

 COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Carter wished everyone a Merry Christmas and stated that he looked forward to everyone working together in 2021. He stated that he thought there were a lot of positive things going on in the county and hoped for a bright future in 2021.

Commissioner Dickerson wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Commissioner Hall wished everyone a Merry Christmas and hoped everyone would have a prosperous New Year.

Commissioner Jefferies wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Commissioner McVey wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Commissioner Oestreicher wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and prosperous New Year. He added Happy Holidays and wished everyone in their family gatherings to observe all the precautions and health aspects as much as possible so that everyone can proceed in 2021 with a healthy and safe population.

Chairman Owen reminded all of the residents of Caswell County that this is the time of the year that everyone is more prone to power outages and he asked everyone to be a good neighbor and to keep a check on their neighbors especially the elderly. He asked that everyone be prepared because the power could be lost quickly and could be off for 3 hours or 3 days, have some bottled water for up to 2 to 3 days, a heat source if possible, have the telephone numbers for the sheriff’s department, EMS, local fire department, just in case for some reason 911 goes down they can still reach those services. Chairman Owen also encourage everyone to enroll in the Code Red System.

Commissioner Oestreicher added to Chairman Owen’s comment and stated that battery chargers for cell phones may be a nice Christmas present.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

No announcements or upcoming events were given.

CLOSED SESSION

Chairman Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner McVey to go into closed session to consider the compensation, terms of appointment and performance of an individual public officer (NGS 143-318.11(a)(6)). After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. (Commissioners Carter, Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher, and Owen voted in favor.)

REGULAR SESSION

Commissioner Oestreicher moved, seconded by Commissioner McVey to resume regular session. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:24 a.m. Commissioner McVey moved, seconded by Commissioner Carter to adjourn. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. (Commissioners Carter, Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher, and Owen voted in favor.)

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Paula P. Seamster David J. Owen

Clerk to the Board Chairman

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