



Since 1712

HYDE COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA

Hyde County Commissioners Meeting Summary

March 19, 2012

Please note, the meeting summary is not intended to replace official minutes of the March 5 meeting of the Hyde County Board of Commissioners. Official minutes will be up for approval at the April 16 meeting.

Commissioners present: Commissioner Chair Sharon Spencer, Commissioner Vice Chair Dick Tunnell, Commissioner Anson Byrd, Commissioner Barry Swindell on the Mainland; Commissioner Darlene Styron on Ocracoke.

Others present: County Manager Mazie Smith, County Attorney Fred Holscher and Clerk to the Board Lois Stotesberry, Deputy Clerk Justin Gibbs on the mainland; Deputy Clerk to the Board Jamie Tunnell Carter on Ocracoke.

- Minutes of the March 19 and 23 minutes were approved.
- As part of public comment, Ocracoke citizen Fred Westervelt said he was pleased with the new public information services in place in the county, lauding PIO Megan Shaw for her work in releasing information relating to county government, such as board packets, meeting summaries, minutes and Hyde Happenings. He also asked if the commissioners had looked into incineration as a method of solid waste disposal.
- There were no public comments on the mainland.
- Grants Administrator Kris Noble gave a report on the Talent Enhancement Demonstration Grant, explaining the grant helped give county staff capacity to administer grants in-house. Explaining the complicated process of obtaining the \$75k in funding, she said a public hearing on the grant closeout was delayed because the hearing was not advertised correctly.

- In other grant matters, Noble briefed the board on 2008 Waterfront Access and Marine Industry Grants - received from N.C. Department of Natural Resources and the Division of Marine Fisheries - that gave the county three waterfront properties to preserve access to marine resources in Hyde. Commissioners approved a lease agreement for one of the properties, 185 Landing Road, that Noble said will allow the county to move forward with development of the property and generate revenue while preserving access for commercial and recreational boaters.
- Commissioners gave approval to hold a public hearing during the April 16 meeting, at the request of N.C. DOT Division of Aviation. The hearing is primarily for informational purposes regarding projects at Engelhard Airport.
- At the request of Ocracoke businesses, commissioners approved a \$21,000 advertising campaign to reach potential visitors in the Raleigh area, as well as the Hampton Roads, Va. area. Funding comes from the Ocracoke Occupancy Taxes and the campaign was endorsed by the Ocracoke Occupancy Tax Board.
- A resolution opposing federal rules by the U.S. Department of Labor relating to temporary non-agricultural workers (H2B workers) in the U.S. was unanimously passed by commissioners. The board recognized these rules would have a severe negative economic impact on small businesses in Hyde, namely seafood processing plants. The board directed the PIO to send the resolution to the appropriate legislators.
- A proposed fee of \$10 for travel trailer inspection was tabled by the commissioners. Manager Smith said the fee was in line with other municipalities she contacted about it.
- Commissioners named members of the newly formed Hyde County Recreation Committee, with representatives for each township. In Currituck, Charles Tooley and Danny Thomas were named; Fairfield representatives are Charles Sears and Benjamin Simmons; Lake Landing representatives are Anthony Roper and Ron Gabriel; Ocracoke includes Kristen Harris and one vacancy; Swan Quarter representatives are Daryl Pugh and Chad Spencer; and Commissioner Dick Tunnell will also serve on the committee.
- Commissioner Tunnell resigned from the East Carolina Behavioral Health Board, citing a timing issue. Commissioner Spencer was appointed as his replacement.
- Commissioners discussed whether or not employees should be drug-tested and undergo criminal background checks upon new hire. It was disclosed the service could cost the county upwards of \$5,000 annually,

but more than 90 percent of counties in the state have these requirements in place for new hires. No action was taken, but the board may revisit the issue at a future meeting.

- Hyde PIO Megan Shaw gave an update on the county's efforts in fighting the "Ferry Tax." She said lobbyists Joe and Henri McClees are gearing up for the May Legislative Session and are encouraging citizens to keep contacting elected officials. She submitted a letter that contains contact information for legislators, as well as media outlets.
- County Manager Smith updated the board on several issues, including:
 - An invitation to the N.C. Association of County Commissioners Legislative Day, to be held in Raleigh on May 15.
 - Her attendance at the N.C. Coastal Local Government Forum on March 26 -27 in Nags Head. She said the conference was "very sobering" regarding rules and regulations coastal counties face.
- During commissioner reports Darlene Styron thanked department heads for their participation in the March 23 board retreat meeting, saying the presentations were informative and will be very useful in planning the 2012-13 Hyde County budget. She also reported:
 - The Ocracoke Community Center Board is becoming more organized;
 - The Science, Technology, Environment and Math (STEM) Fair at Ocracoke School was a big success, with nearly 100 percent participation from students;
 - Plans for the Fourth of July festivities on Ocracoke are underway;
 - The Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce is planning on extending a "Pirate Day" weekend to reach Ocracoke; and
 - To answer Fred Westervelt's question, she referred to Commissioner Byrd, who said the incineration options were still in the works for Hyde solid waste.
- Commissioner Barry Swindell requested financial reports for the third quarter 2011-12 budget from administration and EMS. Acting EMS Director Justin Gibbs was able to provide the report for the EMS Department before the meeting adjourned. Manager Smith pointed out the department was well under budget, which is remarkable considering the major hurricane that hit last year.
- After closed session, commissioners took action to hire a new Human Resources Director, based on the recommendations from the county's interview committee and the county manager. The new hire, Tammy Blake of Ponzer, will be introduced to the board when she begins work with the county in May.

- As informational items, commissioners received reports from the following departments: EMS, Code Enforcement/Inspections; Elections; Emergency Management; Finance and the Mattamuskeet Senior Center.

The next meeting of the Hyde County Commissioners will be held April 16 at 6 p.m. in the Government Center in Swan Quarter and the Commons Area of Ocracoke School.