

Hyde County Commissioners Meeting Summary

March 5, 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 March 19 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 and County Attorney Fred Holscher on the mainland; Clerk to the Board Lois Stotesberry on the Ocracoke.

- Hyde County Girl Scouts from Troop 2758 presented the colors and led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance. The commissioners proclaimed the week of March 11 – 17 as “Girl Scout Week” in Hyde County. As an in-kind gesture, the scouts presented each commissioner, as well as the county attorney and manager, with a box of Girl Scout Cookies.
- Minutes from the February 20 meeting were approved, with one correction.
- As part of public comment, students from the University of North Carolina who had opted to spend their spring break doing community service in Hyde County introduced themselves to commissioners. Jeesu Choi, Meredith Richard, Sarah MacLean, Yue Zhang, Matthew Mord, Emily Keefer, Kane Borders, Grace Harvey, Simone Duval, Danbi Yi, Katherine Ferguson and MamHarr Gaye have volunteered at various locations throughout the county. The Commissioners commended them for their hard work.
- No one on Ocracoke offered public comments.
- Hyde County Airport Manager Jane Hodges introduced temporary Assistant Airport Manager Doug Gibbs, who is serving a four-month internship at the airport, thanks to a grant from the Vocation Rehabilitation Program. “
- Kathy Ballance, director of Hyde County Hotline, went before the board to present information on the nonprofit organization and to request \$10,000 from the county as part of next year’s budget. Ballance said Hyde County Hotline employs three full-time staffers, as well as three part-time employees and serves as an intervention and advocacy agency for victims of sexual assault and domestic abuse. Last year, the agency received 551 crisis calls and served 155

victims of domestic violence and 14 sexual assault victims, according to Balance. She also outlined the agency's fundraising efforts, including the new weaving endeavor that reuses non-wearable clothing to make rugs and accessories.

- The Commissioners gave the go-ahead to the N.C. Department of Commerce's Division of Community Planning (DCP) to assist the county with the development of a new strategic plan by passing a resolution to reimburse the agency with mileage and meal allowances during their work period. DCP Chief Planner Lee Padrick appeared before the board to outline the initiative's tentative budget, timeline and steps to take as part of the strategic planning process.
- Mark Carawan, chairman of the Mainland Hyde County Occupancy Tax Board (OTB), presented a request to grant the Engelhard Development Corporation \$2,000 from the OTB funds. It was pointed out that a request to contribute \$2,000 to the efforts to oppose the "Ferry Tax" was denied by the Mainland OTB. Commissioners unanimously approved the OTB to grant \$2,000 to the Engelhard Development Corporation, which will be used for the Engelhard Seafood Festival.
- Chuck White, representing Meridian Senior Living - an assisted living care facility that manages more than 40 facilities in North Carolina – presented a request for Hyde to work with neighboring Tyrrell County for the construction of a new facility in Tyrrell County. Tyrrell currently does not have any type of long-term care housing. The Commissioners unanimously directed the county manager to contact Cross Creek Health Care regarding the request. If Cross Creek is in favor of allowing Hyde County to forfeit their 30 bed allocation to Tyrrell County, then the resolution to do so is approved.
- Hyde County Cooperative Extension Director Mac Gibbs and his staff presented their annual "Report to the People" on the agency's activities. Gibbs outlined crop research milestones, farmer education assistance, and money saving initiatives in place in Hyde. Notably, the extension office's recycling program saved 18,000 pounds of pesticide jugs from going into landfills and saved farmers upwards of \$45,000 in disposal costs. 4-H agent Natalie Wayne outlined youth activities in the county, namely the "signature event" Hyde Seek and Discover Camp, which obtained state-wide recognition last year. Stacey Midgett gave a presentation on her efforts to bring wellness to Hyde, including canning demonstrations with fresh, local vegetables and programs to help citizens eat healthier.
- Commissioners Spencer and Styron, as well as County Manager Smith updated citizens on the "Ferry Tax" fight. One year ago, commissioners were active in opposing the tolls. Now, they're back in the same boat, along with neighboring

counties, to oppose proposed new tolls and increases. Commissioner Spencer pointed out a moratorium on increased ferry tolls, issued by Gov. Beverly Perdue, will save the county more than \$50,000. However, the moratorium isn't a permanent solution. She advised that it was necessary to continue to actively oppose the tolls in order to resolve the issue. The Commissioners approved a contract and agreement for McClees Consulting - a lobbying company from Oriental - that has joined Hyde, Pamlico and Beaufort Counties, to represent them on the issue. The Board urged citizens to contact the county PIO, Megan Shaw, to arrange transportation to a rally at the state capitol soon and to also contact their legislators.

- The Commissioners approved an administrative agreement for employees to receive the State 457b Plan, which comes at no cost to the county.
- Andrea Gregory, assistant finance officer, asked the board to approve the sale of several items as surplus on GovDeals. The sale was approved, and included such items as a lawn tractor, backhoe, bush hog, scales, two trash trucks and computer equipment.
- Commissioners approved the relocation of water lines in Fairfield, with costs to be covered by NCDOT.
- A policy to govern funding of nonprofit organizations was read for first considered and discussed by commissioners. If adopted, the policy will provide guidelines and accountability for nonprofit organizations requesting funds from the county.
- A website policy was discussed by commissioners and referred to the county attorney and public information officer for follow up and further study.
- Tax Administrator Linda Basnight asked the Board to set dates for the 2012 Board of Equalization and Review Hearings. April 10 was the date agreed on for the first meeting.
- The Commissioners also agreed to change the date and location of the board's budget planning retreat to March 23 at the Government Center in Swan Quarter.
- Budget transfers from the Health Department and Solid Waste Department were approved unanimously.
- Reports from the Elections Office and Tax office were provided.
- Supplemental information provided to the board included: the Economic Improvement Council; a letter from Sen. Kay Hagan congratulating the county on its 300 year anniversary; laws governing lobbying by local government entities,

NCDOT bridge replacement, the new director of East Carolina Behavioral Health; and a letter from NC20 on sea level rise.

- No action was taken after closed session and commissioners adjourned at approximately 9:45 p.m.

***A typo in the calendar included in the commissioners' packet incorrectly set the next board meeting for March 13.*

The next meeting of the Hyde County Commissioners will be Monday, March 19, 2012 in the Government Center in Swan Quarter and the Ocracoke School, via video teleconferencing equipment.