



Since 1712

HYDE COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA

Hyde County Commissioners Meeting Summary

April 16, 2012

Please note the meeting summary is not intended to replace official minutes of the April 16 meeting of the Hyde County Board of Commissioners. Official minutes will be up for approval at the May 7 meeting.

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

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

- The meeting convened at 4 p.m. and commissioners immediately took action to approve the agenda, sending them into closed session
- The board entered open session at 6 p.m.
- The minutes from April 2nd were approved.
- During public comment, Ocracoke resident Leslie Lanier spoke on the Ocracoke side to say the occupancy tax board did a great job on looking forward with recreational possibilities on the island. She said children were the future of Ocracoke and rec services could also tie into the health and well-being of all island residents.
- George Chamberlin also spoke to the occupancy tax funding, saying the tax has been used to cover many expenditures that were not tourism-related. He suggested the Ocracoke Occupancy Tax Board check into their bylaws and use monies raised to promote tourism and advertising, utilizing input from civic and business owners.
- There were no public comments from attendees on the mainland.

- A “celebrity” was in attendance on the mainland side. Manager Smith introduced Allen Mason, a fifth-grader at Mattamuskeet Elementary School and World Junior Swan Calling Champion. The young swan caller did a live demonstration and earned kudos from commissioners and a round of applause from the audience. “We’re very proud of the honor you’ve brought to our county,” said Chairwoman Spencer.
- Sheriff David Mason came before commissioners to recognize Jason Daniels as Hyde County’s Employee of the Month for April. Since 2005, Daniels has served as a deputy sheriff on Ocracoke Island, where he lives with his wife and two children. Sheriff Mason lauded his dedication and said he was an asset to the department. In addition, the Sheriff said Daniels is involved in the community and has excellent respect and rapport among citizens. His dedication even shined through his bout with cancer a few years ago.
- Commissioners proclaimed April National County Government Month, encouraging county officials, employees, schools, citizens and visitors to celebrate the privilege of democratic government. Commissioners directed staff to forward the signed proclamation to the National Association of County Commissioners.
- Officials from the N.C. Department of Transportation’s Aviation Division, as well as a graduate student at N.C. State University came before commissioners to conduct a public hearing on the possibility of developing a Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) program at the Engelhard Airport. Hyde County is well-positioned for the program, considering space and location, as well as the possibility for economic growth. According to DOT project manager Bobby Walston, the RPA program will attract educational programs and stimulate job growth in Hyde. It will come with no cost to the county and little or no environmental or noise impacts. Ocracoke resident George Chamberlin spoke up for the RPA program, saying Walston’s expertise and attention to detail would be a win-win for Engelhard Airport. No action was taken on the item, but commissioners were visibly impressed with the program and its potential opportunities.
- Commissioners supported free and open beach access when they passed a resolution in support of H.R. 4094, the “Preserving Access to Cape Hatteras National Seashore Recreation Area” act. Per staff recommendations, the public information office was directed to send the resolution to neighboring counties and stakeholders, elected officials, members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Natural Resources, as well as the subcommittee on Forests, Parks and Public

Lands. If approved, H.R. 4094 will restore access on the Seashore to the status it was before the 2008 Consent Decree was put in place.

- A Resolution Supporting the Development of Protocols to Measure Sea Level Rise was approved by commissioners. Responding to the N.C. Sea Level Rise Assessment Report issued by the state science panel on coastal hazards. In the resolution, Hyde joins the 19 other coastal counties to ask for protocol and methodology in developing policies regarding sea level rise. “It’s not an exact science,” said Commissioner Chair Spencer. She pointed out current sea level rise models show Hyde under water in 30 years.
- A resolution to permit the county manager to appoint officers, employees and agents without securing board approval was tabled.
- Recommendations for funding from the Ocracoke Occupancy Tax Board were also tabled. Before the funding endorsements are re-submitted to commissioners, Darlene Styron directed OTB board members to review their bylaws.
- No action was taken on a proposed five-year lease with the N.C. Division of Forest and the county for pumps at the Engelhard Airport.
- The board approved Emergency Manager Justin Gibbs to move forward with a collaborative regional hazard mitigation plan with Beaufort, Carteret, Craven and Pamlico Counties. Gibbs said the goal is to coordinate with neighboring counties and combine the individual hazard mitigation plans into one by 2014. The project will be grant-funded and some items will be eligible for reimbursement. Regional disaster plans, added Gibbs, tend to be more favored by the Federal Emergency Management Administration.
- Also under Emergency Services, the board approved a variance request for Bertha Cooper to allow her to remain in FEMA housing beyond the mandated program completion.
- Demolition of housing structures on Lake Swamp Road was approved by commissioners. The project contract was awarded to low-bidder Blackwater Enterprises for a lump sum of \$12,000 and is part of the Community Development Block Grant Community Revitalization Project.
- Changes to a policy governing funding for non-profit organizations were approved.
- Commissioners learned of Ocracoke resident Peter Vankevich’s appointment as branch librarian for the Beaufort-Hyde-Martin Library. No action was taken to fill Vankevich’s seat on the library’s board of trustees.

- No action was taken on a request from the Engelhard Airport Board to pay members \$25 for each meeting they attend.
- Brian Carter was appointed to represent Ocracoke on the Hyde County Recreation Commission.
- Commissioners reviewed an application for committee appointees and board members. The purpose for the paperwork is to allow the clerk to the board of commissioners to have this information on file.
- The following budget transfers were approved to cover expenditures in administration, health department and maintenance.
- Commissioner Swindell made a motion to hire Justin Gibbs as full-time Emergency Manager, which passed unanimously.
- Commissioner Styron reported she had attended meetings of the Ocracoke Occupancy Tax Board and the Ocracoke Civic and Business Association.
- Commissioner Tunnell reported clean-up concerns around the Swan Quarter Dike.
- Commissioner Spencer reported she attended the meeting of the Albemarle Commission. She thanked county officials for observing the month of April as Child Abuse Awareness Month.
- Manager Smith said she would be attending a debris management workshop in Dare County, as well as the regional meeting of the N.C. Association of County Commissioners. She also reported a golf-cart accident in Ocracoke where victims were alive thanks to quick response efforts from Hyde EMS.
- Department reports were submitted from Animal Control, Health Department, Code Enforcement/Inspections, and the Mattamuskeet Senior Center.
- Supplemental information, including Albemarle Food Bank's 24/7 – 365 Campaign, Board of Health Meeting Minutes, County Manager's Evaluation Form, N.C. DOT 2040 Plan and Hyde Transit's Steering Committee Meeting Minutes, was submitted.
- No action was taken following another closed session.
- The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m.

The next meeting of the Hyde County Commissioners will be held May 7 at 6 p.m. in the Government Center in Swan Quarter and the Commons Area of Ocracoke School.

