



# County of Dare

P.O. Box 1000 | Manteo, NC 27954

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## MINUTES

### DARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING

Dare County Administration Building, Manteo, NC

**5:00 p.m., January 19, 2021**

Commissioners present: Chairman Robert Woodard, Sr., Vice-Chairman Wally Overman  
Rob Ross, Steve House, Jim Tobin, Danny Couch, Ervin Bateman

Commissioners absent: None

Others present: County Manager/Attorney, Robert Outten (virtual attendance)  
Deputy County Manager/Finance Director, David Clawson  
Master Public Information Officer, Dorothy Hester  
Clerk to the Board, Cheryl C. Anby

A full and complete account of the entire Board of Commissioners meeting is archived on a video available for viewing on the Dare County website [www.darenc.com](http://www.darenc.com).

At 5:04 p.m. Chairman Woodard called to order the regularly scheduled meeting with appropriate prior public notice having been given. He read the invocation provided by Rev. Jody Moore and then led the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

#### **ITEM 1 – OPENING REMARKS – CHAIRMAN’S UPDATE**

Following is a brief outline of the items mentioned by Chairman Woodard during his opening remarks, which can be viewed in their entirety on the Dare County website:

- Announced Moody’s Investor Service had upgraded the County’s insurer rating to Aa1 from Aa2 and had upgraded the LOB’s from Aa2 to Aa3. The County benefits from the upgrade, which is owed to the sound financial position supported by long-term planning and policies driven by our Finance Director and this Board.
- Chairman recapped the recent COVID statistics stating the total case count since March was 2,300, with 201 active cases currently in the County. The majority of the cases were due to direct contact. There were recent outbreaks at the two assisted-living facilities and the Detention Center. Weekly testing would continue at these facilities until a twenty-eight day period of no new cases was identified. There were 1,300 more vaccine doses coming this week coupled with 1,162 doses from the hospital.
- He had attended the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Martin Luther King, Jr. sermon hosted yearly by the Lewis family.
- The State of the County address would be presented on January 27, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.
- Chairman gave an encouraging presentation regarding current challenges and the need to unify ourselves with positivity. He stated in part: “Tough times do not last, but tough people do.”

## **ITEM 2 – PUBLIC COMMENTS**

At 5:29 p.m. floor was opened for making public comments via email at [dcboc@darenc.com](mailto:dcboc@darenc.com). The Board received two emails during the meeting.

1. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Regulaski submitted comments not objecting to the tax dedicated to Avon beach nourishment; however, noting “the use of Hwy 12 as a tax boundary line” was “not equitable”.
2. George Carver, Exec. Director, Dare Minority Coalition submitted a request for County resources to aid in clearing ditches to “prevent flooding”.

The County Manager closed Public Comments at 5:30 p.m.

## **ITEM 3 – 2022 AVON VILLAGE BEACH NOURISHMENT, (Att. #1)**

Coastal Science Engineering (CSE) had provided a proposal for the Avon Village Beach Nourishment project. According to the proposal, the cost would be reduced by \$2-3 million if piggy-backed to the Buxton renourishment project. There were three levels of beach/dune restoration with the emergency portion to include 240,000 cubic yards along 8,000 linear feet of beach. This section extends south from Avon Pier to Askins Creek North Drive. The County Manager explained the County was not yet ready to make a decision; however, it was necessary to have the consultants begin working in order to meet time restraints. He recommended approving the contract to get them started. If the Avon project did not move forward, the County would pay for the work done. Letters of explanation would be sent to Avon residents with a public hearing scheduled in the coming weeks to discuss logistics.

### **MOTION**

Commissioner Tobin motioned to approve the CSE proposal/contract, authorize the final contract to be signed by the County Manager and approve the Capital Project Ordinance. Commissioners House and Bateman seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

## **ITEM 4 – FISCAL YEAR 2021 MID-YEAR BUDGET REVISIONS (Att. #1)**

A summary of the FY2021 mid-year budget revisions was provided to the Board. The County Manager explained there were significant gains in most of the County’s revenue sources. He pointed out the County’s financial position had improved markedly and would allow a number of budget revisions. He touched on several of the adjustments which included financing vehicles and equipment; return of \$300,000 to the school’s local capital outlay and the transfer from General Fund would increase by \$586,417. He also reviewed the revisions as they applied to County staff. A 2% COLA would be part of the budget revisions along with the funding of the Merit Pay program. He noted employees had worked hard since the beginning of COVID and the Health Department, EMS, Sheriff’s Department and other first responders had performed in an exemplary manner without the first complaint. He outlined how \$1,000, \$600, \$400 and \$200 one-time COVID pay would be released to staff in appreciation. The Board members each added their thanks to County staff’s selfless and exceptional service throughout the pandemic.

### **MOTION**

Vice-Chairman Overman motioned to adopt the budget amendment for the Capital Investment Fund and adopt the budget amendment for operating budget changes for the General, C&D, Sanitation, Water, Insurance and Fleet Maintenance Funds.

Commissioner House seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

## **ITEM 5 – CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PLANNING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS – PROPOSED PLANS FOR EMS STATIONS**

Mr. Outten outlined the opportunity to speed up plans to replace EMS Station 1 by partnering with Kitty Hawk in their plans to build a police and fire station at the bypass. They are moving along quickly and need to know if the County is agreeable to join in the effort. An old cost estimate from Cahoon+Kasten Architects projected costs for the project. Oakley Collier was asked to review the square footage estimates for project accuracy. The County Manager reviewed several scenarios for square foot costs at \$200-\$250/sq. feet. Initial estimates indicated the cost to add a two-bay EMS station to the Kitty Hawk plans could cost the County approximately \$500,000, which would be a marked savings.

The County Manager advised the Town of Kill Devil Hills' EMS project was different. The old station, in dire need of renovation or replacement, was located on Kill Devil Hills' property. It would be difficult to replace the building and still operate during new construction. Through part of the discussions with Kill Devil Hills, the idea of purchasing the land and building of Mako Mikes had been raised in order to build a new larger station with good accessibility. The new station could be built while continuing operations at the old station. The owner could be asked to donate a certain amount of possible proceeds in order to ease the burden of purchase by the County. If the purchase was shared with Kill Devil Hills, the cost would be divided. Kill Devil Hills was not far enough in their plans yet to pursue further.

Vice-Chairman Overman explained he would like for the County Manager to negotiate the purchase of the property irrespective of whether Kill Devil Hills moved forward with their project because it was an ideal location and the County could be doing the project without the Town's joinder. The Board discussed and agreed the locations of the prospective stations were ideal, especially if the County was going to keep pace with needed services.

### **MOTION**

Vice-Chairman Overman motioned to move forward with negotiations and plans with the Town of Kitty Hawk to adjoin an EMS station with their proposed new fire station, if held at a cost around \$500,000; to continue discussions with Kill Devil Hills regarding a new EMS station and authorized the County Manager to move forward with discussions with the owner of Mako Mikes to pursue the purchase of the property.

Commissioner House seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

## **ITEM 6 – CONSENT AGENDA**

The Manager announced the items as they were visually displayed in the meeting room.

### **MOTION**

Commissioner House motioned to approve the Consent Agenda:

- 1) Approval of Minutes (01.04.21) **(Att. # 2)**
- 2) Buxton Maintenance/Storm Damage Repair Grant **(Att. # 3)**
- 3) Tax Collector's Report
- 4) LeaseQuery 3-year Software Subscription Agreement
- 5) Authorization to Present Service Weapon to Retiring Deputy Sheriff

Commissioner Bateman seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

Commissioner Couch congratulated Deputy Charlene Seto on her retirement.

## ITEM 7 – BOARD APPOINTMENTS

- 1) Aging Advisory Council  
Vice Commissioner Overman motioned to reappoint Brandi Bohanan and Kaye White for another term.  
Commissioner Ross seconded the motion.  
VOTE: AYES unanimous
- 2) Planning Board  
Commissioner Couch motioned to reappoint John Finelli and David Hines for another term.  
Vice Chairman Overman seconded the motion.  
VOTE: AYES unanimous
- 3) Commission for Working Watermen  
Commissioner Tobin motioned to reappoint Jamie Reibel and Steve House for another term.  
Commissioner Ross seconded the motion.  
VOTE: AYES unanimous
- 4) Dare County Joint Community Advisory Committee  
Vice-Chairman Overman motioned to reappoint Jim Tobin for another term.  
Commissioner House seconded the motion.  
VOTE: AYES unanimous
- 5) Older Adult Services Advisory Council  
Commissioner House motioned to reappoint Jim Tobin for another term.  
Commissioner Couch seconded the motion.  
VOTE: AYES unanimous

## ITEM 8 – COMMISSIONERS' BUSINESS & MANAGER'S/ATTORNEY'S BUSINESS

Commissioners and the County Manager frequently make extensive remarks, which can be viewed in their entirety in a video on the Dare County website. Following is a brief summary outline of the items mentioned by Commissioners:

### Commissioner Tobin

- Reported on recent meeting of the Oregon Inlet Task Force. There were some issues in the replacement of some navigational aids outside the Inlet and he was hopeful they would be resolved in a few months.
- Provided a report of his trip with Commissioner House and Jordan Hennessy to Mobile, Alabama and Morgan City, Louisiana to review the pump systems, drag arms and drag heads for the County's dredge. The proposed drag head for the County's dredge may be undersized, which would require revisiting the permits for any recommended changes and changing the drag arm.
- He reviewed the Oregon Inlet dredge schedule. Merritt was expected February 14. The Currituck was still at the shipyard for at least a year.

#### Commissioner Ross

- Reported on a study by UNC, Charlotte and Duke University regarding COVID and school openings. The study's conclusion of in-school infections after monitoring eleven school districts with 100,000 students and staff were extremely rare. There were no transmissions of child to adult reported. He noted his continued support to the County's schools for a safe return to in-class learning, as evidence seems to reflect minimal risk.
- The Animal Shelter Project would have a ribbon-cutting ceremony on March 19, 2021. The initial fund-raiser sold out with five hundred commemorative brick pavers.
- Reported the Albemarle Commission would meet Thursday to elect new officers and he would provide an update at the next meeting.
- He thanked the many nurses and staff of the Outer Banks Hospital Ambulatory Unit for their dedication and excellent care provided to patients during these trying times.

#### Commissioner House

- He reported on the trip for dredge research in Alabama and Louisiana. He noted they had been able to see some of the steel to be used to build the County dredge. The trip had been informative and produced many good ideas as the project moves forward.
- Thanked the Board for his reappointment to work with the Working Watermen Commission. He would provide updates on fishing issues at a later meeting.
- Reported on events in history today. In 1809, the author and poet Edgar Allen Poe had been born. In 1807, Commander of the military forces in the Confederacy, Robert E. Lee had been born. His estate later became what we now know as Arlington National Cemetery.
- Provided the Pet of the Week video showcasing an adoptable dog named "Woodstock".

Vice-Chairman Overman – Noted he had nothing further to report.

#### Commissioner Bateman

- Noted and appreciated the trash clean up along the Causeway by the Coastal Science Institute.
- Remembered Thomas Williamson, who had died last week. He had been a retired Federal Aviation Administration program manager and had traveled all but one state. He was a dedicated volunteer to the County.

#### Commissioner Couch

- Chief Judge Linda McGee, a Corolla resident, who had served on the North Carolina Court of Appeals, retired this year and he wished her the best in retirement.
- Reported on the vaccination clinic at the Fessenden Center. It was well organized and orderly with a great spirit of cooperation and caring.

#### **MANAGER'S/ATTORNEY'S BUSINESS**

County Manager Outten commented on the Moody's upgrade and commended the County staff for their hard work, the management of department budgets and the Board's guidance.

Dave Clawson thanked the Board for allowing the financial models and adoption of policies which have been part of the upgrade success. He noted Dare County was unique in that they have had the same bond council, underwriter and the same financial advisors since 1993.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Chairman Woodard asked for a motion to adjourn.

**MOTION**

Commissioner House motioned to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Bateman seconded the motion.

VOTE: AYES unanimous

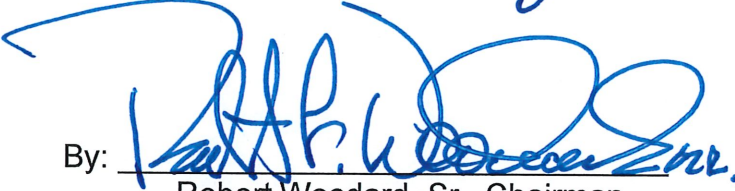
At 6:40 p.m., the Board of Commissioners adjourned until 9:00 a.m., February 1, 2021.



Respectfully submitted,

By:   
Cheryl C. Anby, Clerk to the Board

APPROVED:

By:   
Robert Woodard, Sr., Chairman  
Dare County Board of Commissioners

Note: Copies of attachments (Att.), ordinances, resolutions, contracts, presentations, and supporting material considered by the Board of Commissioners at this meeting are on file in the office of the Clerk to the Board.