



THE RANDOLPH RECAP

JANUARY 3, 2022

COMMISSIONER MEETING AGENDA SUMMARY

AGENDA ITEMS:

- Public Comment
- Annual Audit Report
- Closure of Browns Meadow Road
- Detention Center Updates
- Library Fines
- Tire Tax Distributions



Critical issues facing our community and county government have never been greater as we progress in the 3rd decade of the 21st Century. The Randolph County Board of Commissioners holds regular public meetings on the first Monday of each month, beginning at 6:00 pm, in the 2nd Floor Meeting Room at the Historic Courthouse, 145 Worth Street, Asheboro, N.C. At each meeting, issues impacting our county and citizens are presented and evaluated by the County Commissioners.

Randolph County government is committed to providing citizens with the opportunity to access information and obtain the latest news and public updates regarding the county and its government. The Randolph Recap is a new addition to the Randolph County web page. It will provide monthly highlights and summaries from County Commissioner meetings. It will also highlight information on current issues facing the County Commissioners and the Departments and agencies of Randolph County government. The Randolph-Recap will serve as one of the various communication outlets, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and print media, that will update and communicate with our Randolph County citizens.

We hope the Randolph Recap is helpful to you and would appreciate your input and comments as we move forward.



Hal Johnson
Randolph County Manager



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Public Comment

Two speakers took the floor during the public comment period, both commenting on the Confederate Statue in front of the Historic Randolph County Courthouse.

Kevin Price, Randolph County resident, shared concerns that the monument represents a single demographic of Randolph County citizens. **"I think we need to think about everyone,"** said Price.

Dwain Roberts, Commander, Sons of Confederate Veterans, would like to see the structure remain in its current location.

Commissioner Frye, Chair, assured the public that their concerns were not falling on deaf ears. **"We have continued to consider issues related to that statue. So far, there has been no clear solution to solve this matter,"** said Frye.

Annual Audit Report

Randolph County recently received a clean opinion result for its June 30, 2021 audit. Cherry Bekaert LLP planned and performed the audit in accordance with national and governmental standards.

"Results of the 2021 audit included revenues coming in higher than budget, as well as expenditures being less than what was brought in," said April Adams of Cherry Bekaert. Ms. Adams also shared that Randolph County's policy is to maintain 20% of their expenditures in an unassigned fund balance for the year and successfully met that goal at 26% in 2021, and 24% in 2022. The county currently maintains \$103 million worth of capital assets (including vehicles, equipment, and ongoing construction costs, offset by \$3.7 million of depreciation cost) and \$169 million worth of long-term debt (mostly made up of installment notes and a contract payable for water).

Commissioner Allen commented on the sizeable audit, saying, **"anything that the county does there will be numbers associated with, and this audit tells a story. I would like to commend the county's finance staff for all their hard work in getting this done."**

Commissioner Frye highlighted the county's strength, saying, **"the economy of Randolph County has been doing very well, especially with all the things we have faced."**

Will Massie, Assistant County Manager, also commended the finance staff for their diligence in completing this audit. **"For thirty-two consecutive years, we have received an award for excellence in financial reporting. For eighteen years we have received the distinguished presentation award, and we were recently notified that we got that award again."** Randolph County also received an increase in bond rating for the first time in many years.



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Closure of Browns Meadow Rd.

Commissioners unanimously approved the permanent closure of the portion of Browns Meadow Road in Liberty, that runs across the Greensboro-Randolph Megasite.

Commissioner Allen shared potential cause for concern, as the Megasite continues to develop, regarding fire protection. **“This closure will not impact response times for Julian, however, that could change with other closures of interchanges.**

It will be imperative to take a look at the fire protection and make sure they have access across 421 on the southwest side.”

Mr. Frye shared available options to ensure residents near the Megasite have access to fire protection. **“This is an issue we are well aware of and we will have a plan for in the very near future,”** said Frye.

Detention Center Updates

On November 18, 2021, a state inspection took place for Phase 2 of the Randolph County Detention Center project. State inspectors concluded that upgrades to the existing smoke control system would need to be complete before approval. This unforeseen change affects the detention center construction schedule and requires additional work.

A multi-year capital project fund has already accounted for Detention Center project costs, separate from the General Fund. To address these additional construction costs, commissioners unanimously approved \$500,000 of budgeted funds to be reallocated from contingency. These funds were initially advanced to initiate the project design but were reimbursed from debt proceeds in 2019.

Commissioner Frye raised concerns over the time-consuming nature of the project and the delay in detection of the smoke control system issues. Representatives from Bordeaux Construction explained the hardship of renovating an occupied detention center during a global pandemic. **“It just seems that we are always on the wrong side of the coin when it comes to this project. It is just frustrating for us because we want to get it done. We have invested a significant amount of money in it and would like to get it done as quickly as possible. This can be hard to swallow from a taxpayer’s standpoint.”** said Commissioner Allen.

Commissioner Kidd agreed with the frustration of his fellow board members but also voiced his displeasure with the varying guidance at the state level. **“We have no recourse for the state changing the rule. They handle approval or not.”** Commissioner Kidd also pointed out that there is no actual budget change or additional line item associated with this request. Instead, funds initially earmarked as a contingency will be used. **“I think it is important for the taxpayers to know that we are not dipping into the budget or general fund here,”** said Commissioner Kidd.



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Library Fines

Libraries nationwide and across North Carolina are moving to eliminate overdue fines. To date, some 25 North Carolina libraries have done so, including Alamance County, Greensboro, and High Point. Recent research and practice in the library profession has shown that overdue fines do not prompt the return of library material, but are significant deterrents to library use and have an undue impact on those who can least afford them.

Libraries that eliminate fines see their visits and checkouts increase, combined with a dramatic rise in the return of long-overdue books and other items. However, they do not see a significant increase in the late return of material. In this approach, although fines are not assessed, due dates are still assigned, and overdue notices are sent. Borrowers are also still held financially responsible for lost material. The Randolph County Public Libraries Board of Trustees has expressed an interest in considering a fine-free model and will further explore and discuss this option.

Tire Tax Distributions

N.C. General Statute 130A-309.54 imposes a tax on new tires to provide funds for the disposal of scrap tires. The State of North Carolina imposes a sales tax on tires. Tire dealers collect this tax and send it to the State, who then distributes the funds to counties. Randolph County receives a portion of these funds. However, as part of our Landfill Agreement and Franchise, we require Waste Management to manage the scrap tire program and pay for disposal. Counties may use proceeds of the tax distributed only for the disposal of scrap tires.

County Commissioners unanimously approved a budget amendment, that funds be passed to waste management for the operation of tire disposal services as required by the existing Franchise and Landfill Agreement. Hal Johnson, Randolph County Manager, explained that there have been some issues within scrap tire disposal. **“When the landfill was created, I don’t think there was any vision of the number of scrap tires that would be taken to the landfill for them to dispose of. What has happened in the last few years is the amount of scrap tires has far exceeded the number that was projected”** -Hal Johnson, County Manager.

“We have to work on some legislation or a change in the way this tax follows tires in the state of North Carolina because what we are doing is not working.”- said Kenny Kidd.