



THE RANDOLPH RECAP

MAY 2, 2022

COMMISSIONER MEETING AGENDA SUMMARY

AGENDA ITEMS:

(May 2, 2022)

- Public Comment
- DSS Renovation Project
- Courthouse Renovation Project
- Farm, Food, and Family Education Center Updates
- RCSO Renews Mediko Contract
- HCCBG Recommendations
- Public Hearing- Fire Service Districts

- Public Hearing Comments
- Opioid Settlement Update and Project Ordinance
- Caraway Speedway
- Chairman's Comments



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.



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DSS Renovation Project

Recently, the County advertised bidding of the Northgate Renovation for DSS. Six contractors submitted bids; however, due to rising material and equipment prices, the low bid came in at \$1,599,792, which is \$40,382 higher than the original estimated construction costs.

Fortunately, there is approximately \$44,000 of unused allowance in the Northgate Renovation project that can be applied towards construction costs.

S & S Building and Development came in with the lowest responsible bid, and projects a timeline of ten months to project completion.

Commissioner McDowell said of Randolph County's Department of Social Services "If you have never been to a social services board meeting, I invite you to come. They are inventive, entertaining, and informative. They give really good information about what each department does. They are fabulous."

Public Comment

Clyde Foust, President, Randolph County NAACP, asked commissioners to provide clarity on their recent decision to leave the Confederate statue where it is, as it is. **"Why or what is the reason that you would leave that monument in the place that it is, with the information that you have?"** asked Foust.

Jane Ledwell-Gant, a Randolph County citizen, feels the commissioner's recent decision regarding the Confederate monument overlooks particular segments of Randolph County's population. **"Do we not make a difference? Are we the last on your totem pole,"** asked Ledwell-Gant?

Sean Walker, a Randolph County citizen, asked commissioners to investigate the recent handling of a case involving the maltreatment of four dogs by animal services. **"Somewhere the system failed these animals, and we are asking you guys to maybe, investigate where the breakdown happened,"** said Walker.

William Doula, a Randolph County citizen, is concerned about traffic and dangers presented by landfill trucks traveling on Old Cedar Falls Road. **"It is going to be dangerous, there is no road for people to stand on. There is no shoulder and if you run off the road you are in a ditch,"** explained Doula.

Chairman Darrell Frye said that **"he believes the board expressed itself in the vote regarding the statue and the vast majority of the citizens of the county. There are families here in this county on both sides of this issue, and there is a lot of history there that can't be changed."**

Chairman Frye also shared that in regards to the animal maltreatment, the individual in question was charged by the Randolph County Sheriff's office with five felonies earlier in the week.

Chairman Frye also thanked Mr. Doula for his comments.



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Courthouse Renovation Project

In February 2020, the Randolph County Board of Commissioners authorized the Courthouse Renovation Project. To account for all costs related to the project, a multi-year capital project fund was established, separate from the General Fund.

G.S. 159-13.2 states that “a project ordinance authorizes all appropriations necessary for the completion of the project and neither it, nor any part of it, need be readopted in any subsequent fiscal year.”

To date the project has been funded with county reserves dedicated to capital. The General Fund has previously transferred \$2,236,729 to fund the project. However, additional costs will be incurred to complete the front desk area and cover higher than expected furniture cost, so a budget amendment is needed.

Commissioners voted to approve a budget amendment is needed to update the total project cost by \$26,000.

Farm, Food, and Family Education Center

Recently, with funding from the state and allocation of County funds, the Farm, Food, and Family Education Center project has begun to move forward. HH Architecture was previously selected as the designer for this project and has completed an updated programming study for the newly reconfigured project. At the May board meeting, Kristen Hess, Principal Architect, HH Architecture, presented an overview of the programming study and a proposal for design, bidding, and construction administration. (HH Architecture Final Design)

“As you well know, this is an important development for your county. It is all about serving agriculture in this county, which is a huge economic driver for you,” said Hess.

“I would like to thank the committee that has worked so hard on this. I know Allen McNeil has been a part of that, we appreciate the funding that he and Pat Hurley, along with Senator Dave Craven have provided. We are thankful for that, and the good start that provided us. I feel good about the committee’s work. I have to commend Kenneth Sherin, he has done Yeomen’s work on this project from the beginning,” said Commissioner Allen, vice-chair.

“As far as the budget amendment this just moves money that we already had set aside for this project, from the construction to the architectural to cover the contract as proposed,” said Will Massie, Assistant County Manager, Finance Officer.

Commissioners approved the proposal by HH Architecture, the associated budget amendment to the Farm, Food, and Family Education Center Capital Project Ordinance, and the County Manager to sign the contract.



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RCSO Renews Mediko Contract

The Randolph County Sheriff's Office has reviewed its contract with Mediko, Inc., its current inmate medical provider and other potential suiters.

In doing so, it reviewed one new additional proposal from Correctional Healthcare for the 2022-2023 budget year. After comparing and contrasting both providers, the Sheriff's Office chose to renew its contract with Mediko, Inc.

The cost to renew services with Mediko, Inc. is \$791,532.55 for the year, which averages out to \$65,961.04 per month.

Commissioners approved the renewal of the contract with Mediko, Inc. for the 2022-2023 budget year, and authorized the county manager to sign the contract renewal.

Home and Community Care Block Grant Recommendations

The Randolph County Aging Services Planning Committee (ASPC) made recommendations to commissioners for awarding the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) funds over a three-year-period from July 1, 2022, and running through June 30, 2025. The ASPC recommended the funds be allocated to two service providers; Regional Consolidated Services (RCS) and the Randolph Senior Adults Association (RSAA).

As of May 2, 2022, the state of North Carolina had not announced the county allocations for the HCCBG grant, so the recommendation of was made based on the current year amount of \$897,253.00.

The ASPC recommended a breakdown of \$586,904 to Randolph County Senior Adults Association for category one services, and \$310,349 to Regional Consolidated Services for category two services, equaling \$897,253.00.

Category one services include; adult daycare, congregate nutrition, home-delivered meals, information and options counseling, and transportation. These services will continue to be provided by Randolph County Senior Adults Association. Category two services include; in-home aid levels one, two, and three housing and home improvement. These services will continue to be provided by Regional Consolidated Services.

"These are pass-through funds, these are allocated by the federal and state. Randolph County does not fund this. This is through the Older Americans Act," shared Mark Hensley, Chair of Randolph County ASPC.

Commissioners approved a motion to accept the recommendations from ASPC, to approve Randolph Senior Adults Association and Regional Consolidated Service fiscal year 2022-2023 fund allocations, and to approve Randolph Senior Adults Association for the lead agency.



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COMMISSIONER MEETING AGENDA SUMMARY

Public Hearing- Fire Tax Districts

At the May Board Meeting, Commissioners held a public hearing to discuss proposed changes to the structure of Randolph County fire districts. Currently, there is a fifteen-cent cap on the tax rate for some fire districts in Randolph County. This has proven to be insufficient for some county fire departments.

At the April board meeting, commissioners officially considered moving forward with the abolishment of currently capped service districts for fire protection for Climax, Franklinville, Guil-Rand, and Westside to be replaced with districts that do not have the fifteen-cent cap.

The proposed new service districts would contain the same properties as those currently contained in the capped districts for those areas.

Commissioners considered several solutions before passing a resolution to move forward with the abolishment of districts, including requesting a report be prepared for each district and setting public hearings for the May 2 board meeting and the upcoming June 6 board meeting.

At the close of the June meetings, commissioners may act to abolish current districts and replace them with proposed districts if deemed appropriate.

"I would like to reemphasize that this is not a tax increase. This is not a budget hearing tonight. Fire departments have no taxing authority. This board of county commissioners is elected by the citizens of this county to represent you. Any changes in the fire tax can only be made by the Board of County Commissioners," said Chairman Frye.

Public Hearing Comments - Fire Tax Districts

Calvin Riddle, a citizen of Climax, shared concerns with commissioners over rising tax rates due to growth. **"The arbitrary number is what struck me. From fifteen cents caps to suddenly asking for one dollar and fifty cents. That is ten times what the number is now,"** shared Riddle.

Elbert Kanter lives in the Guil-Rand fire district and is a former volunteer firefighter. Mr. Kanter shared concerns with commissioners about firefighters covering other stations outside of their districts and delayed response times. **"It has to stop. We pay taxes like everyone else, and every human life is just as important as others. But it seems like no one cares,"** said Kenter.

Marlena Shoe, Guil-Rand fire district, believes that the fire station should be manned at all times. **"We have only asked one reasonable thing, that it stays manned. Or someone with the ability to take a rescue call be available,"** said Shoe.

Daniel Worrell, a citizen of Sophia, shared concerns over the potential increase of fire district tax caps. **"My concern is does this open up a road for there to be higher taxes later down the road?"** asked Worrell.

Craig Frasier, Westside Fire District, shared concerns with Commissioners over the confusing nature of the one dollar and fifty cent tax cap and the timing. **"Clearly, the dollar and a half cap tax is also very confusing to taxpayers. Not just double line tax on your bill. The fact that we have a dollar and a half cap is totally confusing. My opinion is that this falls at a terrible time to address any form of a cap increase, much less a tax increase."**

Linda Nutt, Westside Fire District, shared concerns over tax increases with commissioners. **"The problem I have is that many people in my neighborhood are going on Medicaid, they're retired, they're old. I'm afraid if the taxes go up people will be homeless,"** said Nutt.

"If there is anything I would suggest from what I have heard here tonight, is that citizens be more in tune with what your fire station, the leaders, and the fire service are doing. Talk to them, find out what their needs are and if they are raising taxes and why. I think that communication would be huge," said Commissioner Haywood.

Sean Walker, Westside fire district, shared concerns over the confusing nature of increasing taxes. **"I think the dollar and fifty on the paper has totally confused everybody. This is not a number being raised, this is a number that is already there,"** said Walker.



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SPECIAL MEETING AGENDA SUMMARY

Opioid Settlement Update and Project Ordinance

On January 2, 2018, Randolph County Board of Commissioners received a detailed report from the Public Health Director and Emergency Services Director concerning the opioid epidemic and its growing impacts on Randolph County citizens, public health, law enforcement, and emergency services.

After receiving this report, the Board unanimously approved a Resolution, finding that there existed a serious public health and safety crisis involving opioid abuse, addiction, morbidity, and mortality in Randolph County. This Resolution declared the Opioid Crisis a public nuisance in Randolph County and unanimously approved the engagement of attorneys for litigation against manufacturers and distributors of opioids.

On July 22, 2021, The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) notified counties that a \$26 billion national settlement agreement had been reached with the nation's major pharmaceutical distributors which manufactured and marketed opioids. The agreement resolved the claims of both states and local governments across the country.

Opioid Settlement Update and Project Ordinance Continued...

The national opioid settlement is expected to bring as much as \$750 million to North Carolina over 18 years. Counties will receive 80% of these funds based on population. Randolph County is expected to receive \$9,824,046, distributed over 18 years. Randolph County's first payment of \$377,436 is expected in late spring 2022, with another payment of \$830,054 expected in late summer 2022. The County will then receive yearly payments until 2038. On August 2, 2021, the Randolph County Board of Commissioners voted to approve a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the State of North Carolina and Local Governments on the use of the funds relating to the settlement of Opioid Litigation. The MOA was both developed and facilitated, by the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC).

The N.C. Attorney General's Office and the State Health Department created specific guidelines and procedures for how each county would be able to use its share of the money. Option A, of the Memorandum of Understanding, requires each county receiving Opioid Settlement Funds to hold at least one annual meeting with all municipalities in the county. The purpose of the meeting will be to receive input on proposed uses of the Opioid Settlement Funds and to encourage collaboration between local governments. The meetings will be open to the public.

On August 3, 2021, the board approved an N.C. Memorandum of Agreement (NCMOA) specifying how the settlement funds could be used. Under the terms of the NCMOA, the County has certain responsibilities before the funds can be utilized to address community needs. First, a special revenue fund must be established to account for the distributions. Distributions are expected over the next 18 years, totaling over \$9.8 Million.

The Randolph County Opioid Collaborative will provide ongoing planning. This collaborative has been initiated and coordinated by the Randolph County Public Health Department.

"This board has never ducked difficult issues, they have dealt with everything straight up. In 2018 Randolph County Commissioners declared the opioid crisis in Randolph County a public nuisance. Our board of commissioners authorized and approved the engagement of attorneys for litigation against manufacturers and distributors of opioids. We were one of the first counties in North Carolina to do that, and I am very proud of our commissioners for taking that action," said Hal Johnson, County Manager.

Commissioners unanimously approved an ordinance to establish the Opioid Settlement, Project Fund.



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Caraway Speedway

Caraway Speedway was recently allocated \$485k in COVID-19 relief funds by the North Carolina legislature.

Commissioner Haywood spoke about Caraway Speedway and the recent allocation.

“They are a part of the fabric of our history here in Randolph County and I am glad to see them get some compensation for the loss of revenue that they had during that time period,” said Haywood.

“I would also like to thank Representative Allen McNeil for recognizing the value that motorsports have played in North Carolina.”

Chairman's Comments

National Police Week takes place from May 11-17, 2022, and recognizes law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty for the safety and protection of others.

“We salute our law enforcement, and we thank you for that. I would also mention we have lots of our firefighters here tonight that put their lives on the line to protect and provide a safe living environment for the citizens of this county. We thank you for that,” said Chairman Frye.

May 14, 2022, is designated by the United State Postal Service as National Letter Carriers Stamp Out Hunger Day. Randolph County citizens are encouraged to support the food drive by placing non-perishable items in or near their mailbox on May 14, 2022. The letter carrier will pick up the items while delivering mail. All items will be used to address food insecurity.

National Hurricane Preparedness Week takes place from May 1- 7, 2022. The observance of Hurricane Preparedness Week is to acknowledge and provide better protection from the dangers of hurricanes and tropical storms. The board encourages all citizens to prepare by assembling their personal emergency supply kits and updating emergency plans. Hurricane season officially begins on June 1 and continues through November 30. Randolph County Emergency Services encourages all Randolph County residents to sign up for REACT for emergency alerts.