

Meeting of the Hoke County Board of Commissioners on Monday, February 20, 2017 at 7:00 pm in the Court Room of the Hoke Court Annex. The meeting, originally scheduled to take place in the Commissioners Room in the Pratt Building, was moved to the Court Room in the Court Annex Building due to SBI personnel locking the Pratt Building to collect evidence related to a search warrant. Local law enforcement was stationed outside the building to direct meeting attendees to the Court Annex Building.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

James Leach, Chairman  
 Harry Southerland, Vice Chairman  
 Tony Hunt  
 Robert Wright  
 Allen Thomas, Jr.

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Letitia Edens, County Manager  
 Jessica Scott, Associate, Locklear, Jacobs,  
 Hunt & Brooks attending for County  
 Attorney Grady Hunt

County Attorney Grady Hunt and Clerk to the Board Gwen McGougan were absent due to sickness.

Chairman Leach called the meeting to order with a quorum present and welcomed everyone.

Commissioner Robert Wright led the Pledge of Allegiance and Chairman James Leach gave the invocation.

**ITEM 1. Adoption of Agenda**

Item 8, NCACC Video, was loaded onto the projection equipment in the Commissioners Room in the Pratt Building and was unavailable due to the necessity of relocating the meeting to the Court Room in the Court Annex Building.

**Motion: Commissioner Hunt made a motion to adopt the agenda with the exception of Item 8, NCACC Video, seconded by Vice Chairman Southerland.**

**Action: The motion passed unanimously.**

**ITEM 2. Consent Agenda**

- a. Minutes from the February 6, 2017 regular meeting
- b. NC Vehicle Tax System Pending Refund Report – Total  
\$929.66
- c. Finance: Budget Amendment for Hoke County Sheriff  
Department
- d. Approve appointment of Darlene Clark to Sandhills Regional  
Library System
- e. Lightning & Thunder policy for Parks & Recreation

**Motion: Commissioner Wright made a motion to approve items a-e on the Consent Agenda, seconded by Vice Chairman Southerland.**

**Action: The motion passed unanimously.**

**ITEM 3. Tax Collector's Report**

**Motion: Vice Chairman Southerland made a motion to table the Tax Collector's Report due to the absence of Tax Collector Daphne Dudley, who was unable to attend the meeting due to sickness, seconded by Commissioner Wright.**

**Action: The motion passed unanimously.**

**ITEM 4. Surplus Property**

The following list of properties acquired by tax foreclosure were presented by memorandum from the Tax Collector to the Board of Commissioners to be declared surplus:

Item	Parcel	Location	Acreage	Taxes	Fees	Acquired
a.	694251601159	949 Reed Drive	Lot	847.79	967.67	8/5/2016
b.	584770001089	3426 Ashemont Road	0.149	3,632.24	1,288.66	8/5/2016
c.	584770001187	John Brown Road	3.000	2,015.25	1,022.52	8/5/2016
d.	384920001018	Off Gainey Rd/ Kaylee Lane	7.905	3,105.18	1,099.97	8/5/2016

**Motion: Commissioner Thomas made a motion to declare the properties listed as a-d as surplus, seconded by Vice Chairman Southerland.**

**Action: The motion passed unanimously.**

**ITEM 5. Tax Assessor's Report/Releases**

**Motion: Commissioner Thomas made a motion to table the Tax Assessor's Report, seconded by Commissioner Wright.**

**Action: The motion passed unanimously.**

**ITEM 6. NC Fall Festival**

NC Fall Festival Executive Director Melissa Pittman presented the Board with a proposed lease agreement for the NC Fall Festival to use the Old Armory Ball Field to hold the Fall Festival Concert on Saturday, September 16, 2017. Ms. Pittman also requested on behalf of the Fall Festival to use the grass lot across from the Pratt Building.

**Motion: Commissioner Hunt made a motion to approve the NC Fall Festival's request to use the grass lot across from the Pratt Building, seconded by Commissioner Wright.**

**Action: The motion passed unanimously.**

**Motion: Commissioner Hunt made a motion to table approval of the lease agreement for the use of the ball field pending a text change at the request of the County Attorney, seconded by Commissioner Wright.**

**Action: The motion passed unanimously.**

## **ITEM 7. Discussion regarding the Hoke County Animal Shelter**

Raeford resident and Animal Shelter volunteer Kathy Leandro spoke to the Board about concerns that she has with regard to the shelter:

There is a need for funds for emergency veterinarian services. Shelter staff often has to request donations to pay for vet fees for items such as wound care.

There appears to be space available to expand the shelter to allow for housing animals inside and away from exposure to adverse weather conditions. Mrs. Leandro would like to see this considered during budget preparation for the upcoming fiscal year.

Kristi Cartwright has done an outstanding job of getting the adoption rates up and euthanization rates down for the shelter. Euthanization rates have dropped from 98% in 2010 to 48% in 2016. Kristi has also set up a Facebook account for the shelter and she uses that account to feature animals available for adoption. The Assisting the Hoke County Animal Shelter Facebook page has almost 15,000 followers, including followers in other states. Mrs. Leandro would like to see Kristi placed in charge of the shelter.

**Motion: Commissioner Wright made a motion to amend the Animal Control budget by \$1,000 for emergency vet care and supplies, seconded by Vice Chairman Southerland.**

Commissioner Thomas asked if the County Manager had any comments. Mrs. Edens called upon Mr. Ralph Cecil, Animal Control Director, who was in attendance. The County Manager had asked Mr. Cecil to be in attendance in case there were questions about the emergency vet care. Mr. Cecil confirmed that emergency vet needs are funded by donations. Citizens make donations directly to the vet clinics and the clinic applies the funds to the bill. Funds do not go through the Animal Control department. The shelter uses Cross Creek Animal Hospital and Reilly Road Animal Hospital. Animal Control has not been successful in negotiating an agreement with the local vet, Raeford Animal Clinic. Mr. Cecil said that they have adequate funds for supplies and he and the County Manager suggested that the full \$1,000 be used for emergency vet care. Commissioner Wright also suggested that shelter staff or volunteers be invited to the next budget retreat to voice the needs of the shelter.

Commissioner Thomas asked if Animal Control has money in their budget that can be transferred to Professional Services for the emergency vet funds. Commissioner Hunt commented that if Animal Control does not have the funds in their budget, the funds would need to come from Fund Balance. Commissioner Wright agreed and emphasized that his motion was intended to be for a transfer from Fund Balance. His intent is not to move funds from one line item to another. Chairman Leach added that transferring funds within the department's budget might hurt them in another area. Commissioner Thomas said that he believes that if the funds are there in the department budget it is best to transfer them.

**Amended Motion: Commissioner Wright said that he would like to appropriate \$1,000 for emergency vet services, and if there are funds remaining at the end of the fiscal year, transfer them back to fund balance, seconded by Vice Chairman Southerland.**

**Action: The motion passed unanimously.**

**ITEM 8. NCACC Video**

As part of Item 1, Adoption of Agenda, this item was tabled until March 6, 2017 meeting.

Vice Chairman Southerland, having noticed that Tax Assessor Jennie Gibson had entered the meeting, suggested that the Board reinstate Item 5, Tax Assessor's Report/Releases.

**Motion: Commissioner Hunt made a motion to add Item 5, Tax Assessor's Report/Releases back to the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Wright.**

**Action: The motion passed unanimously.**

**ITEM 5. Tax Assessor's Report/Releases**

Tax Assessor Jennie Gibson presented the following tax releases for Board approval:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Reason</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Annie Mae Moultrie	PP	2015	MH double listed	9.35
Annie Mae Moultrie	PP	2016	MH double listed	9.35
Bradley & Malinda Rogers	PP	2016	MH sold in 2015	<u>163.18</u>
				181.88

**Motion: Commissioner Wright made a motion to approve the Tax Releases submitted totaling \$181.88, seconded by Commissioner Hunt.**

**Action: The motion passed unanimously.**

**ITEM 9. Manager's Report**

County Manager Letitia Edens began by updating the Board on the progress of the splash pad. The project is 90-95% complete. Fencing has been installed and the retaining wall will be finished by the end of the week. Additional concrete has been poured which will require the contractor to return to install more padding. When an estimated date of completion for the splash pad is available the Manager would like for the Board to set up a meeting to go to the park and look at it.

The State Bureau of Investigation arrived at the County Office earlier today with a search warrant to look at time records. The County is cooperating with the investigators.

Vice Chairman Southerland asked the Manager about a report published by the local newspaper on their website which said that the County had been "shut down". Mrs. Edens replied that investigators would not allow anyone to enter the Pratt Building so that they could question certain people. The County was not "shut down".

Chairman Leach asked the Manager to clarify "time records". The Manager replied that in this case the SBI wanted time sheets made available. Although most of the County departments use the Time Clock software, there are still a few departments that manually complete time sheets.

Mrs. Edens continued by stressing that she and County staff are complying with the investigators' requests. She is not allowed to discuss anything further due to personnel laws.

**ITEM 10. Closed Session – Economic Development or Personnel**

**Motion:** Commissioner Hunt made a motion to enter into Closed Session to discuss an Economic Development matter, seconded by Commissioner Wright.

**Action:** The motion passed unanimously

No action was taken during Closed Session.

**Motion:** Commissioner Hunt made a motion to return to Open Session, seconded by Vice Chairman Southerland.

**Action:** The motion passed unanimously

**Motion:** Vice Chairman Southerland made a motion to enter into Closed Session to discuss a Personnel matter, seconded by Commissioner Hunt.

**Action:** The motion passed unanimously

No action was taken during Closed Session.

**Motion:** Commissioner Hunt made a motion to return to Open Session, seconded by Vice Chairman Southerland.

**Action:** The motion passed unanimously

**ITEM 11. ADJOURN**

**Motion:** Commissioner Thomas made a motion to Adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Hunt.

**Action:** The motion passed unanimously

  
James A. Leach, Chairman

  
Wendolyn McGougan, Clerk to the Board

