

Greg Edds, Chairman  
Jim Greene, Vice- Chairman  
Mike Caskey  
Judy Klusman  
Craig Pierce



Aaron Church, County Manager  
Carolyn Barger, Clerk to the Board  
John W. Dees, II, County Attorney

## **Rowan County Board of Commissioners**

130 West Innes Street • Salisbury, NC 28144  
Telephone 704-216-8181 • Fax 704-216-8195

### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**December 6, 2021 – 3:00 PM**

**J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROOM**

**J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROWAN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

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Present: Greg Edds, Chairman  
Jim Greene, Vice-Chairman  
Mike Caskey, Member  
Craig Pierce, Member  
Judy Klusman, Member

County Manager Aaron Church, Clerk to the Board Carolyn Barger, County Attorney Jay Dees, and Finance Director James Howden were also present.

Chairman Edds convened the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Chaplain Michael Taylor provided the Invocation.

Chairman Edds led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **SELECTION OF CHAIR**

County Attorney Jay Dees presided over the selection of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Mr. Dees opened the floor for nominations for Chairman.

Commissioner Klusman nominated Commissioner Edds followed by a second from Commissioner Greene.

Commissioner Caskey moved to close the nominations. Commissioner Pierce seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Upon being put to a vote, the nomination for Commissioner Edds to serve as Chairman carried unanimously (Commissioner Edds refrained from voting and is therefore counted in the affirmative).

## **SELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

Commissioner Klusman nominated Commissioner Greene followed by a second from Commissioner Pierce.

Commissioner Caskey moved, Chairman Edds seconded and the vote to close the nominations passed unanimously.

Upon being put to a vote, the nomination for Commissioner Greene to serve as Vice Chairman carried unanimously (Commissioner Greene refrained from voting and is therefore counted in the affirmative).

Chairman Edds expressed appreciation for being able to serve as Chairman of the Board. Chairman Edds praised the Commissioners for their interests, talents and abilities and said he was honored to speak not only for himself but also for the Board at times.

## **CONSIDER ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

County Manager Aaron Church provided a handout with a request for the following additions to the Consent Agenda:

- Fire Department Funding (added as Consent Agenda Item V)
- ADW Change Order (added as Consent Agenda Item W)

Commissioner Klusman moved, Commissioner Caskey seconded and the vote to approve the additions as requested passed unanimously.

Mr. Church also requested to move Consent Agenda Item G (Approval of Change Order #1 with Carolina Siteworks for Roadway Project) to the regular agenda for discussion.

Commissioner Klusman moved, Commissioner Greene seconded and the vote to move the item to the regular agenda as requested carried unanimously.

Chairman Edds placed the matter on the agenda as item #12a.

## **CONSIDER DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA**

There were no deletions from the agenda.

## **CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Commissioner Klusman moved, Commissioner Greene seconded and the vote to approve the agenda as amended passed unanimously.

## **CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Commissioner Klusman moved, Commissioner Greene seconded and the vote to approve the minutes of the November 15, 2021 Commission Meeting passed unanimously.

## **1. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Greene moved approval of the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman and passed unanimously.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

- A. Hangar Development - TBE WA for Design and Bidding
- B. Resolution Establishing Commission 2022 Meeting Schedule
- C. Sale of Ground Lease Hangar T2 From Overcash to DRM Air
- D. Martin Starnes Contract Modification
- E. Permission to release RFP for Door Access Control
- F. Approval of Contract with The FRMT Group for Psychological Services at Sheriff Department
- G. Approval of Change Order 1 with Carolina Siteworks for Roadway Project (moved to the regular agenda as Item #12a for discussion)
- H. Approval of Task Order 16 with McGill Associates, PA for Construction Phase Service for Water and Sewer Work on Access Road
- I. Annual Bond Report
- J. Tax Refunds for Approval
- K. Approval of a Lease Agreement with Lisa Trexler for Stokes Ferry Recycling Convenient Site
- L. Approval of Contract with S.E Collins, Inc for Engineering Services for Library Boiler Replacement
- M. Resolution to Award Sidearm to Retiring Detective Teresa Haupt
- N. Schedule Quasi-Judicial Hearing for SUP 01-18 Amendment: Celco Partnership for January 3, 2022
- O. Schedule Quasi-Judicial Hearing for SUP 01-22
- P. Combined Preparedness Grant Application
- Q. Bi-Weekly Environmental Health Report
- R. Emergency Services Night-Shift Differential
- S. Approval of Lease Agreement with John and Kate Schofield for 417 N. Main Street and 120 E. Kerr Street
- T. Approval of Contract with Strategics Consulting for Federal Lobbying Services
- U. Approval of Contract with McGuireWoods Consulting, LLC for State Lobbying Services
- V. Fire Department Funding (addition to the Consent Agenda)

TO: Board of Commissioners  
FROM: Aaron Church, Rowan County Manager  
DATE: December 6, 2021  
SUBJECT: Fire Department Funding

The Board approved the use of American Rescue Plan Award ("ARPA") funds to provide \$50,000 for each Rowan County's Volunteer Fire Departments and Rescue Squad at the November 1, 2021, Board meeting.

I am requesting that the Board amend that action to utilize Article 46 Sales Tax rather than ARPA funding.

### MOTION:

1. To disapprove using ARPA funds to be allocated to Rowan County's Volunteer Fire Departments and Rescue Squad.





November 30, 2021                      revised

Aaron Church  
Rowan County Manager  
130 West Innes Street  
Salisbury, NC 28144

Re:    **West End Plaza – Adaptive Reuse for Agricultural Center & Meeting Hall  
Additional Services ACO2 for Mall Concourse Renovations – Alternate #4**

ADW is presenting this proposal for Architectural and Engineering services related to the request to renovate/remodel the Mall Concourse at West End Plaza adjacent to the Agricultural Center and Meeting Halls project. This would be an additional scope of work, added to the AIA Owner Architect Agreement dated Oct. 1, 2019 and labeled ACO-2 for Construction Alternate #4. The project scope is as follows:

1. Design and document for pricing the renovations to the Mall Concourse of West End Plaza adjacent to the former Belk Store and terminate at the nearest Main Entrance adjacent to the Veterans Affairs space.
2. The design will take into consideration the features of the mall concourse and will endeavor to reuse those elements that are appropriate to the design intent of the project as determined through discussions with the County's team.
3. All floors, walls and ceilings, materials and finishes, HVAC, Plumbing and Electrical systems will be examined for condition and appropriateness.
4. A system for "masking" empty tenant storefronts will be developed for improving the overall appearance of the concourse.
5. **The fees are as follows:**

<b>Schematic Design</b>	<b>\$15,575.00</b>
<b>Design Development</b>	<b>\$ 9,345.00</b>
<b>Construction Documents</b>	<b>\$37,380.00</b>
<b>Contractor Bidding/Pricing</b>	<b>included in base contract</b>
<b>Construction Administration</b>	<b>included in base contract</b>
<b>Total for ACO2</b>	<b>\$62,300.00</b>

<b>ACO1 or addendum 1 for surveyor</b>	<b>\$ 16,475.00</b>
<b>ACO2 or addendum 2 for Alternate #4 fee total</b>	<b>\$ 62,300.00</b>
<b>Original Contract fee</b>	<b>\$1,208,250.00</b>
<b>Total new Contract if accepted</b>	<b>\$1,287,025.00</b>

Sincerely,  
ADW Architects, p.a.



Robert J. Lauer, Jr. AIA  
Managing Principal

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\_\_\_\_\_ date  
client signature

\_\_\_\_\_ date

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www.adwarchitects.com

## **2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Chairman Edds opened the Public Comment Period to entertain comments from any citizens wishing to address the Board. The following individuals came forward:

- T.J. Jenkins of 175 Shuffler Woods Road in China Grove, said he had been unable to get answers to questions he had emailed to various individuals and departments.

In response, Chairman Edds advised Mr. Jenkins he would call him the following day.

- Karen South Jones expressed support for continuation funding for the PORT Program.

With no one else coming forward, Chairman Edds closed the Public Comment Period.

## **3. PUBLIC HEARING & SUMMARY PRESENTATION – EDC “PROJECT EXCELSIOR”**

Scott Shelton, Vice-President of the Economic Development Commission (EDC), presented the economic impact summary for the proposed expansion of Project Excelsior (Project).

Mr. Shelton provided a power point and reported the Company behind the Project was an existing manufacturer in the County. According to Mr. Shelton, the Company was well-respected in its field and employed a large number of people in the community.

The Company was experiencing a substantial increase in demand for its products and planned to expand one of its current facilities or establish a new facility somewhere in the southeast.

The Project would create 40 new jobs over the next two (2) years. Approximately 85% of these new jobs would be in the production and logistics categories. The remaining positions would be managerial and sales positions.

The Company would invest approximately \$10.5 million in facility improvements and new equipment. The majority of the improvements would be completed by the end of 2023.

Mr. Shelton reviewed the requested grant assistance. The Company previously received a Level 1 Grant from the Board of Commissioners and had not yet completed its initial five-year grant term. In order to avoid having to enter into a second grant agreement with the Company for this potential expansion, the Rowan EDC proposed the Board consider amending the original five-year grant agreement to extend its term by two (2) years. During these two (2) additional years, the Company would receive a grant equal to only 33% of the new taxes paid.

Using the power point, Mr. Shelton illustrated the revenue impact of the potential Project on Rowan County. Modeled with a 10-year horizon, Rowan County would stand to collect an estimated \$1,068,438 disburse a \$519,249 grant and retain an estimated \$549,189 of new revenue.

Mr. Shelton said the EDC was also working with 'Project Excelsior' and the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina to pursue a grant from the State from its One North Carolina Fund, which was a discretionary program that offered cash grants for job creation.

If approved, Rowan County would have to apply for the grant on behalf of the Company. Though the required local match amount for the grant was yet to be determined, it would likely be satisfied through the County's Investment Grant.

Chairman Edds opened the public hearing to receive citizen input regarding Project Excelsior. With no one wishing to address the Board, Chairman Edds closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Klusman seconded and the vote to approve the investment grant as requested passed unanimously.

Commissioner Pierce moved to authorize the submission of a One NC Grant application to the State of North Carolina on behalf of the Company. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greene and carried unanimously.

#### **4. QUASI-JUDICIAL HEARING FOR SUP 02-21 AMENDMENT: TAYLOR CLAY PRODUCTS**

Chairman Edds read the Chairman's Speech (Exhibit A) and declared the hearing for SUP 02-21 Amendment to be in session. Chairman Edds said the hearing would focus on an application submitted by Bryce Evans on behalf of Taylor Clay Products for a 12,000 square foot building expansion on Tax Parcel 408-020 located at 1225 Chuck Taylor Lane.

The Clerk swore in those wishing to provide testimony in the case.

Assistant Planning Director Shane Stewart presented the Staff Report (Exhibit B). Mr. Stewart also provided a power point (Exhibit C).

Mr. Stewart said Taylor Clay was requesting an amendment to their Special Use Permit (SUP) approved on September 7, 2021 to increase the approved building expansion square footage from 7,875 to 12,000 at their existing brick manufacturing operation at 1225 Chuck Taylor Lane. Per section 21-58 and 21-60(3)(a), the operations that were subject to a special use permit as identified by the table of uses in the Zoning Ordinance required a special use permit for all new and expansion of existing operations. Taylor

Clay received previous special use permits (formerly identified as conditional use permits) in 2002 and 2006 for the addition of a brick kiln and a new building

Using the power point, Mr. Stewart showed the location for the new building and noted the company added eleven (11) parking spaces. Mr. Stewart stated the Board could accept previous findings and that a simple motion to accept would be sufficient.

With no one else having been sworn to provide testimony, Chairman Edds closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Pierce moved to approve the previous Findings of Fact as approved in September. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greene and passed unanimously.

The Findings of Fact were as follows:

1. The development of the property in accordance with the proposed conditions will not materially endanger the public health or safety.

FACT: The 7,875 square foot addition to the existing staff estimated 250,000 square foot facility will be subject to Building Inspections plan review and permitting.

2. That the development of the property in accordance with the proposed conditions will not substantially injure the value of adjoining or abutting property, or that the development is a public necessity.

FACT: No material evidence was presented suggesting this request would injure property values.

3. That the location and character of the development in accordance with the proposed conditions will be in general harmony with the area in which it is located and in general conformity with any adopted county plans.

FACT: According to the staff report, Taylor Clay Products began operation at this location in 1949.

FACT: This request complies with all seven (7) specific special use standards designed to address impacts associated with heavy impact uses.

FACT: The Eastern Rowan Land Use Plan identifies this property as a Commercial / Industrial Area and within the I-85 / US 29 corridor, both of which support the request.

Commissioner Klusman moved to approve SUP 02-21 Amendment. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greene and passed unanimously.

## **5. PUBLIC HEARINGS FOR MULTIPLE ROAD NAMES**

Planner Aaron Poplin reported there were four (4) roads for which the Board needed to conduct public hearings. Mr. Poplin said he would provide the information for each road and allow the Board to conduct a public hearing on each road name before moving to the next.

The first proposed road name was for Farmstead Lane. The road was unnamed and located off the 2000 block of Old Union Church Road. Staff received a petition with seven (7) of the nine (9) property owners supporting the road name of Farmstead Lane.

Chairman Edds opened the public hearing to receive comments from anyone wishing to speak on the renaming of Farmstead Lane. With no one coming forward, Chairman Edds closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Klusman moved approval of the road name of Farmstead Lane. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greene and carried unanimously.

The second road, currently known as Carter Loop Street, was proposed to be changed to Hobby Farm Lane. Mr. Poplin reported that staff received a petition with signatures from two (2) of the four (4) property owners in support of the proposed name.

Chairman Edds opened the public hearing to receive comments from anyone wishing to speak on the renaming of Carter Loop Street to Hobby Farm Lane. With no one coming forward, Chairman Edds closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Klusman moved, Commissioner Greene seconded and the vote to rename Carter Loop Street to Hobby Farm Lane passed unanimously.

For the third public hearing and proposed road name, Mr. Poplin noted there were three (3) houses with access to the road. The existing road name, which was used by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) was Old Woodleaf Road. Mr. Poplin said staff reached out to the property owners; however, no petition was received. With no petition having been received, staff was agreeable to continue to use the current road name of Old Woodleaf Road.

Chairman Edds opened the public hearing to receive comments from anyone wishing to speak on the official naming of Old Woodleaf Road. With no one coming forward, Chairman Edds closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Klusman moved approval of the proposed road name of Old Woodleaf Road. The motion was followed by a second from Commissioner Greene and passed unanimously.

The fourth road was unnamed and located off the 3300 block of Smith Road. There were two (2) houses along the unnamed road with another individual looking to build a home. A petition was submitted to staff for the proposed name of Summers Dale Lane.

Chairman Edds opened the public hearing to receive comments from anyone wishing to speak on the proposed road name of Summers Dale Lane. With no one coming forward, Chairman Edds closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Klusman moved, Commissioner Greene seconded and the vote to approve the road name of Summers Dale Lane passed unanimously

## **6. CONSIDER SNIA 08-21: ABR PROPERTIES**

Assistant Planning Director Shane Stewart reported that Planning Staff received a Special Non-Residential Intensity Allocation (SNIA) request from ABR Properties LLC to construct a 15,000 square foot race shop on Lot 53 of Mooresville Motorsports. The location was 407 Performance Road and further described as Tax Parcel 239-058.

Approving the request would allow the project to exceed the administrative allowance of 12% built-upon area (e.g. buildings, pavement, gravel) limitation requirement of the Coddle Creek watershed and allow up to 70% built-upon area for the project. A total of 10% of the watershed acres may be removed from the 12% limitation and permit up to 70% built upon area.

Mr. Stewart said the request met all standards for approval.

Chairman Edds stated the Board had received quite a few SNIA requests over the past few years and he said at some point the County would need to have a plan in mind when considering the requests. Chairman Edds requested that Planning Staff have a conversation as to what the plan should look like. Mr. Stewart responded that the issue was on Staff's list for review and Planning Staff would talk to the Board in the future.

Commissioner Greene moved, Commissioner Klusman seconded and the vote to approve SNIA 08-21 carried unanimously.

## **7. W.T. GROUP PRESENTATION OF ADA EVALUATION AND TRANSITION PLAN**

Kelly Natoli, Assistant County Manager/Human Resources Director, recalled that several years ago the County had put out a request for proposals to seek an agency to evaluate and help the County come into compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).

Ms. Natoli continued by saying the W.T. Group had been chosen to perform the study/evaluation for the County and to provide a report on its findings.

Ms. Natoli then turned the meeting over to John McGovern with the W.T. Group to present the findings and ADA Transition Plan Report. Ms. Natoli expressed hope the

Board would adopt the plan and implement a series of changes to bring the County into compliance over the next eleven (11) years.

Using a power point, Mr. McGovern highlighted and discussed the details as follows:

### **Requirements for Existing Facilities**

#### **Self-Evaluation**

- Title II regulation by US DOJ at 35.105
- All existing parks, facilities must be audited.
- No grandfathering
- A requirement since Jan. 26, 1992

#### **Design Standards**

- Access is a function of 3 factors: design, construction and maintenance
- Federal 2010 Standards for Accessible Design
- North Carolina Building Code if more stringent
- Park and park assets were added to the standards in 2010. Prior to that building assets were all that were addressed.

#### **DOJ Guidance**

- Unique sites and the program access test
- Recurring sites and the program access test
- Program access test
- Can the program be relocated? Can the program be duplicated? Will a new site be constructed or acquired?

#### **Enforcement Methods and Trends**

- Relief is intended to be injunctive
- Internal access and inclusion solutions process
- US DOJ (DOI, DOE)
- Federal District Court
- Project Civic Access

With regards to the process and site reports, Mr. McGovern reviewed the **PROCESS** as:

- Cloud-based app on smart phones
- Customized checklists we created
- 2-person teams
- Simple tools: digital level, tape measure, and our experienced access staffs

#### **SITE REPORTS**

- Describes the deficit and a solution
- Cites to the federal or state standard
- Image to clarify location of the deficit

- Notes construction tolerance of technical infeasibility

Continuing with the power point, Mr. McGovern highlighted the **TRANSITION PLAN**:

- Title II 35.150(d)
- Lacking US DOG guidance, we strive for a minimum of one of three recurring sites
- With site reports, identifies deficit, solutions, person responsible for barrier removal, and by when barrier removal occurs
- Cost references are for planning purposes, they are not an engineer's estimate

### **TIMING...CAUTIONS**

- No set number of years, we recommend 11
- Be certain to budget and spend resources annually towards retrofits
- Staff awareness is a key to success
- Blend with other county plans, e.g., CIP, replacement schedules, etc.

Mr. McGovern provided a breakdown for the phases as follows:

- Phase One: five years at \$2,607,613
- Phase Two: three years at \$1,177,273
- Phase Three: three years at \$1,203,146
- Smart Practices and County Option: \$1,156,461

Mr. McGovern said the project had been buffeted by the COVID-19 Pandemic; however, the W.T. Group had always been able to get answers and help from county staff. Mr. McGovern said the staff interviews had gone very well.

### **Program and Policy Report**

- Identify access experience and issues
- Identify readiness, contrasted to the Title II requirements
- Staff were well prepared and very receptive
- Deliverable is a report with recommended changes

Mr. McGovern extended special appreciation to Ms. Natoli for her assistance with the evaluation.

Commissioner Caskey referred to the information in the agenda packet and said it appeared approximately one-third of the recommendations pertained to parks-related issues. Mr. McGovern explained that when parks were designed before 2010, dirt and grass were used for accessibility to key areas. Mr. McGovern said dirt and grass was never an accessible route and had probably been used at every park. Mr. McGovern also noted restrooms and parking were often issues for parks, as well.

Commissioner Caskey noted the new West Rowan Library that had recently opened was listed as out of compliance. Mr. McGovern said it was common to find a new

facility that did not completely comply, which sent a message to county staff to hold the designers “feet to the fire” to ensure the designers were giving the contractors the correct advice.

Commissioner Caskey agreed the transition plans should blend with the County’s other plans.

County Manager Aaron Church expressed appreciation to Mr. McGovern and the W.T. Group for their work, along with the work of Ms. Natoli.

Chairman Edds referred to page 10 regarding the ADA transition plan requirements, specifically the requirement for having a county official named to ensure compliance. Chairman Edds asked if the county official was Mr. Church or Ms. Natoli. Mr. Church said Ms. Natoli served as the ADA Coordinator/Compliance Officer for the County.

Mr. McGovern commented regarding the language listed at the bottom of the Board of Commissioners agenda. Mr. McGovern pointed out the language was a requirement to let those with disabilities know they could attend the meeting and have support.

Ms. Natoli said one of the things mentioned in the report was the County must have a Certified ADA Coordinator. Ms. Natoli announced she had received her certification prior to starting work for the County and she was maintaining and continuing the certification.

Chairman Edds said it was Ms. Natoli’s recommendation for the Board to adopt the ADA Self-Evaluation Final Report and Transition Plan.

Ms. Natoli said she would work with the Finance Director to determine what changes were feasible for each budget. Ms. Natoli added that the priorities could be switched around, if needed, and she would keep track to ensure the County made all of its improvements.

Commissioner Klusman moved to adopt the ADA Self-Evaluation Final Report and Transition Plan. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pierce and carried unanimously.

## **8. OPEN BROADBAND UPDATE**

Nick Steward with Open Broadband (Company) provided an update regarding the installation of equipment for broadband services in the County. Mr. Steward mentioned electricity issues with Duke Energy that had been resolved earlier in the day. Mr. Steward also mentioned supply chain issues for equipment that had ultimately resulted in favor of the County. Mr. Steward said the Company was now using newer equipment for which there was a better supply and that also provided better efficiency.

Mr. Steward provided a timeline for the steps currently underway. Mr. Steward said the first installations to go live should occur by the end of this week or the first of next week.

In response to inquiries from Chairman Edds and Commissioner Greene, Mr. Steward discussed line of sight, which would be done on a case by case basis.

Mr. Steward highlighted the packages and pricing available. Mr. Steward noted there would be no rental fees/taxes but there would be a one-time installation fee of \$150.

The Board discussed a strategy to help get the word out to the citizens regarding the availability of broadband.

A brief discussion followed regarding cash flow, supply chain issues and the Company's efforts to stay ahead of the curve.

Assistant County Manager/Chief Information Officer Randy Cress said the State budget did pass and he wanted the Board to be aware of issues staff was watching. Mr. Cress said ARP funds were able to be used for the Growing Rural Economies with Access To Technology (GREAT) Program.

Mr. Cress explained to Commissioner Greene that an unserved area meant no access to any broadband provider. Mr. Cress said there were a lot of unserved areas in the State. Underserved meant there was at least an option to a provider.

Mr. Cress said the County was predominantly a combination of unserved and underserved. Mr. Cress said a second part of the GREAT grant was for fixed broadband and satellite, which did help cover the cost of the equipment to the residents. Mr. Cress said the potential was there for Open Broadband to look at the grant to provide the installation for free and then get reimbursed for it.

## **9. REQUEST FOR PORT PROGRAM**

Alyssa Harris, Rowan County Health Director, recalled that in 2019, Rowan County Public Health was awarded a \$285,326 grant from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina for the implementation of a Post Overdose Response Team (PORT). The grant was a part of BCBS' ongoing efforts to address substance abuse disorder and the opioid epidemic. Since the program's inception and in collaboration with Rowan County Emergency Services and the Center for Prevention Services, the Health Department (HD) worked together to assist both active users and those individuals that are in recovery by offering access to much-needed resources and referrals to treatment. When the grant ended last December, the Commissioners agreed to continue to financially support the program during FY 2021 with the desire of wanting to see more positive results within our community and a return on investment.

The PORT team consisted of a Certified Peer Support Specialist, a Community Paramedic, and a Harm Reduction Program Coordinator; all of whom work together to

provide immediate response following an opioid overdose. Rowan County Emergency Services served as an instrumental part of the program and provided the basic demographics and contact information from all opioid overdose calls. Once the information is received, PORT will make initial contact with the individual within 24-72 hours to offer support, connection to services, treatment options, as well as a Narcan kit, if one is requested. The Certified Peer Support Specialist then continues to follow up with this individual in a 1-month/3-month/6-month interval timeframe after the initial 911 call. In addition to opioid response services, PORT also partnered with community agencies to provide support groups and educational opportunities that focus on substance use disorders and the mental health issues that are oftentimes associated with this disease.

PORT services were impacted by the coronavirus. Immediately following the start of travel restrictions, stay-at-home orders, and social distancing protocols, there was a countywide surge in Rowan of alcohol purchases and substance use. Many support groups and other services that target individuals suffering from substance use disorders were temporarily unavailable, making recovery even less sustainable to many. With COVID-19 and all its restrictions, these much-needed and supportive social networks were somewhat non-existent for those in need. PORT transitioned to putting more efforts towards community outreach. Mobile Narcan distribution stations continued in an effort to prevent and reduce the risk of an opioid related overdose death. As travel restrictions were put in place at the start of the pandemic, there were increased reports of Fentanyl, a potent and versatile opioid, which has been found in illicitly made substances like heroin, cocaine, methamphetamines, ecstasy, and street produced Xanax. Fentanyl significantly increases the risk of overdose among those that use opioids and also increases the risk of overdose among youth and individuals who engage in other forms of illicit drug use.

According to Ms. Harris, Community Outreach Walks also began as another way to offer support to those in need; and because of their success, are now done on a monthly basis. The service not only helped with the distribution of Narcan kits and referrals for treatment, it helped make more contacts with the ever-increasing homeless community and those who are unable to receive support from the local homeless shelter.

PORT collaborated with the County's IT Department and GIS Manager to strengthen its data collection efforts and was able to gather demographic information for each individual served, identify veteran status if applicable, determine access to medical insurance, as well as determine active drug use areas or "Hotspots" within Rowan County.

PORT offered a new educational model, the Community Resiliency Model (CRM), known to empower individuals with the necessary resiliency skills to help them better control and/or overcome their addictions and/or any past traumas. CRM offered wellness skills that focused on the importance of communication and what is happening

in the present moment instead of what happened in one's past. The new educational piece helped afflicted individuals have a new set of skills that could allow them to become more resilient to past traumas and/or bad experiences, with the overall personal goal of creating a more healthy and productive life.

In Rowan, the number of overdoses that PORT has responded to more than doubled since the COVID-19 Pandemic (141 calls pre-COVID vs 333 calls post-COVID). In addition to the increased number of overdoses, Rowan County has seen the number of overdose fatalities increase by almost thirteen-fold since COVID's inception. Whereas there were 3 too many overdose fatalities from October 2019 to March 2020, that number tragically increased to 40 overdose deaths in 2021 alone.

The County's problem with drug use/abuse affects the County's economy and adds additional stressors to community partners. When upper management staff were asked how drug use/abuse affects Novant Health, Rowan Medical Center (NHRMC), the Rowan County Detention Center, Rowan County Department of Social Services, as well as the HD, the following was shared:

- NHRMC, from January 2020 to August 2021, saw IV Drug Hospitalizations costing over \$2.3 million dollars for the treatment of 174 cases or \$13,553/case for ED, inpatient, and/or outpatient care.
- The Rowan County Detention Center also sees a direct correlation with drug use and the rate of crime; and as a result, there is an increase in operating costs in the following ways:
  - an increase in medical costs and in the cost of medical contracts for inmate healthcare
  - an increase in costs for detoxification services and/or mental health services
  - an increase in the costs for meals due to a higher inmate population
  - an increase in the costs of transportation for inmates to attend court in other counties, as a result of prior arrests outside of Rowan County for drug activity
  - an increase in the likelihood of more altercations among the inmates and/or with staff due to the mental health status of the inmate and/or the state of not having access to drugs and coming off of them. As a result of this, there may be an increase in cost to the county for worker's compensation or overtime to fill this position in an officer's absence
  - an increase in cost to hire and train a new employee to replace an officer who may choose to apply for a less stressful position within Rowan County Sheriff's Department or to replace an officer that has chosen to leave the county altogether
  - an increase in the costs for bond as a result of a pre-trial release program, which can sometimes cost the county even more money if and when the individual does not show up for his/her court appearance
- The Rowan County Department of Social Services' budget is affected as a result of drug use and abuse among our county residents. Last year alone, it was

reported that most of the children who entered into the County's foster care program were impacted by their parents' substance use disorders. This factor alone will most likely impact the need for mental health/psychiatric treatment in the near future for our younger citizens.

- Rowan County Public Health has seen a direct correlation in the increase in the number of cases of hepatitis, which is a public health threat and is often a result of drug use and the sharing of dirty needles and supplies. From December 2020 to September 2021, there were 69 cases of Acute Hepatitis A and 325 cases of Chronic Hepatitis C. Please note that Chronic Hepatitis C is often the result of untreatable Acute Hepatitis C, which the majority of results from IV drug use.

In addition to the economical, criminal, and public health issues mentioned above, Ms. Harris provided additional facts the community and PORT continue to face.

Ms. Harris reported PORT had been very successful since its inception in July 2019. Over the past three years, PORT, on average, assisted 46.6% of its clients by offering or referring them to community resources and/or a form of treatment.

Ms. Harris shared several testimonies from individuals and talked about lives that had been saved because of the existence of PORT.

The funding for PORT was scheduled to conclude at the end of the year and Ms. Harris said Rowan County Public Health was requesting to continue the program with the use of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. A budget was included in the agenda packet showing the contractual cost for the Harm Reduction Program Coordinator, as well as the salary/fringe benefits for the current Certified Peer Support Specialist, Community Paramedic, and for an additional fulltime Peer Support Specialist. Lastly, Ms. Harris pointed out the line items to purchase Narcan and supplies for PORT, as well as any expenses related to the 5th Annual Substance Use Forum.

Ms. Harris responded to questions from the Commissioners regarding the services, funding, and the percentage of successful contacts.

Ashley Creek, Certified Peer Support Specialist, said she was a recovering addict, which made her uniquely qualified to serve in her capacity. Ms. Creek said she had seen people as young as 12 years and as old as 70 years overdose from opiates. Ms. Creek continued by sharing stories about some of the program participants that had been successfully reached through PORT. Ms. Creek said one of the participants was present and she asked the Board's permission for the participant to share part of his journey.

"Zachary" introduced himself as a recovering addict and alcoholic and a participant in the program. Zachary said he had struggled with addiction since he was four (4) years

old and that one could not explain the dark aspects and pain of going weeks without hearing your name spoken, or, of living a life where you hurt the people you love the most against your own will. Zachary said one could also not explain what it meant to overdose and then crave what almost killed you. Zachary continued by saying he never understood the depth of his own trauma. One night after an overdose and getting kicked out of a recovery home, Zachary said he had been determined to commit suicide when he received a call from Ms. Creek. Zachary said Ms. Creek let him know she cared and also why she cared. Ms. Creek provided him with resources and he became an active participant of Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. Zachary shared that he had reunited with his mother that he had not seen in eight (8) years and that he also now had a relationship with his brother. Zachary said he had gone from not hearing his name on a weekly basis to having relationships with recovering addicts and support groups. Zachary attributed the sincerity of the call he received from Ms. Creek as to why he had not committed suicide.

Chairman Edds responded to Zachary by saying his comments took more courage than anything any of the Commissioners had ever heard in their years on the Board. Chairman Edds said he would continue to pray for Zachary and for his recovery and he thanked Zachary for talking with the Board.

In response to an inquiry from Commissioner Caskey, Ms. Smith said the HD would be open to a conversation with the Volunteer Fire Departments about their responses to calls for overdoses. Ms. Harris said the HD would see what it could do to help the VFD with prevention and getting the community connected to treatments and services.

Further discussion ensued about continuing the funding for PORT. Ms. Harris confirmed that folks who received Narcan through the VFD would be responded to through PORT if that was the Board's preference.

Chairman Edds noted there was another conversation underway with the HD and several other agencies and for which PORT would possibly be absorbed. Chairman Edds asked about the possibility of funding PORT for six (6) months instead of a year in order to allow the broader discussion time to evolve.

Ms. Harris was agreeable to revisiting the issue in six (6) months.

Commissioner Klusman felt it reasonable to discuss the matter in six (6) months.

Ms. Harris said she would make sure the VFD were aware of PORT services for the community.

Commissioner Klusman moved to continue the PORT Program with the addition of \$123,000 to continue the program and the funds be taken from the CARES Act funds. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Caskey and passed unanimously.

## **10. DISCUSSION REGARDING ANNUAL PLANNING RETREAT**

Chairman Edds asked the Board members about their preference for holding its annual planning retreat.

After a brief discussion, it was the consensus of the Board to schedule a one-day planning retreat on January 18, 2022 beginning at noon.

## **11. BUDGET AMENDMENTS**

Finance Director James Howden presented the following budget amendments for the Board's consideration:

- Finance – To de-obligate FY20 HMEP Grant. \$9,600
- Finance – To de-obligate CDBG/HOME grant budgets. Projects have been completed. \$802,968
- Fire Division – Request the transfer of funds to cover annualized part time needs within the Emergency Services Fire Division. Through November, 80% of budget already utilized. \$32,985
- Animal Services/County Manager – Requesting use of General Fund's unrestricted fund balance to cover change order related to the road that leads to the Animal Shelter. \$12,987
- Finance – The RSS Board of Education was authorized to begin the design and construction of a new middle school on July 1, 2021. This budget amendment is a request to transfer funds to pay architecture fees. \$2,524,500
- Sheriff – Recognize check from Davis Attorneys for restitution of damages done by Steven Jones in the Rowan County Detention Center and budget to the RM Equipment Detention account. \$128
- Social Services – Budget revenue and expense for one-time LINKS supplemental payment to eligible young adults who are or were in DSS foster care. No county match required. \$100,000
- Sheriff – Request to set up budget related to interlocal agreement with Town of Spencer to provide Sheriff Deputies as needed and for the County to be reimbursed \$50 per hour. Agreement already approved. \$79,200

Commissioner Pierce moved approval of the budget amendments as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greene and passed unanimously.

## **12. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

### **BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT**

- Sean Reid applied for reappointment and if approved, the term will expire October 31, 2024.
- Bradford Basinger applied for a vacant seat. The term is for three (3) years and will expire on November 30, 2024.

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Klusman seconded and the vote to appoint Sean Reid and Bradford Basinger passed unanimously.

- Norman Ribelin applied for reappointment; however, he has served two (2) terms. No other applications of interest have been received and therefore, Mr. Ribelin is willing to remain on the Board for another term.

The Commissioners are asked to considering waiving the term limits established in the Resolution that governs the board appointment process and to reappoint Mr. Ribelin for a term that will expire July 31, 2024.

Commissioner Pierce moved to waive the term limits for Norman Ribelin followed by a second from Commissioner Klusman. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Pierce moved the reappointment of Norman Ribelin. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman and carried unanimously.

### **AIRPORT ADVISORY BOARD**

The Airport Advisory Board (AAB) bylaws specify the term ending dates for all AAB members should be June 30. Based on this, the Commissioners are asked to ratify the term expiration dates for the AAB members below.

- Change the term ending dates for Bill Lucey and John Muth from July 31, 2024 to June 30, 2024.
- Change the term ending date for Richard Franklin from December 31, 2021 to June 30, 2022 (at which time he would be eligible for reappointment for a second term).

Commissioner Klusman moved to ratify the term expiration dates as requested. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greene and passed unanimously.

### **CABARRUS-ROWAN METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)**

Each year the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) requires the MPO to supply a list of current Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) representatives along with their alternates. At present, Commissioner Greg Edds is the appointed member and Commissioner Jim Greene is the appointed alternate to represent Rowan County on the TAC. Ed Muire is the County's TCC representative and Mr. Shane Stewart is the alternate.

The Board was asked to reappoint these individuals as outlined above to serve in 2022.

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Caskey seconded and the vote to reappoint Ed Muire and Shane Stewart passed unanimously.

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Klusman moved and the vote to reappoint Commissioners Edds and Greene carried unanimously.

## **HEALTH BOARD**

- On October 4<sup>th</sup> the Commissioners appointed Dr. Melanie Dombrowski to fill the remaining three (3) months of the term for the Optometrist seat, which expires December 31, 2021. The Board is asked to reappoint Dr. Dombrowski for a 3-year term that will expire December 31, 2024.

Commissioner Klusman moved, Commissioner Pierce seconded and the vote to reappoint Dr. Melanie Dombrowski passed unanimously.

- The following members applied for reappointment for 3-year terms that will expire December 31, 2024:
  - Dr. Tony B. Watlington, Sr. (General Public Seat)
  - Dr. James Michael Fuller (Pharmacist)
  - Dr. Corrie Hampton Connolly (Veterinarian)

Commissioner Pierce moved the reappointment of Dr. Tony Watlington, Dr. James Fuller and Dr. Corrie Connolly. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greene and carried unanimously.

- Carla Rose applied to fill a General Public seat that will become vacant on December 31, 2021. If approved, the term for Ms. Rose will be for three (3) years expiring on December 31, 2024.

Commissioner Klusman moved to appoint Carla Rose followed by a second from Commissioner Caskey. The motion carried unanimously.

## **JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL**

Sean Reid applied to fill a vacant seat for a member of the General Public. The remainder of the term will expire on June 30, 2022 at which time he would be eligible for reappointment.

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Caskey seconded and the vote to appoint Sean Reid passed unanimously.

## **LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE (LEPC)**

Lt. Joe Miller applied for a vacant Public safety seat and Angela Ford applied to fill the vacant Media Seat. There are no term limits for these appointments.

Commissioner Pierce moved to appoint Lt. Joe Miller and Angela Ford. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greene and passed unanimously.

## **LIBRARY BOARD**

- Jennifer Nicholson and Pam Bloom applied for reappointment and if approved their terms will expire on December 31, 2024.

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Greene seconded and the vote to reappoint Jennifer Nicholson and Pam Bloom passed unanimously.

- Gary Freeze applied for reappointment; however, he has served two (2) full terms on this board and is not eligible for reappointment.

The Commissioners may consider waiving the term limits established in the Resolution governing the board appointment process and also consider reappointing Mr. Freeze for a term that will expire December 31, 2024.

Commissioner Klusman moved to waive the term limits for Gary Freeze. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pierce and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Klusman moved to reappoint Gary Freeze followed by a second from Commissioner Pierce. The motion passed unanimously.

- The Ex-officio seat is set up per the Library Board's bylaws to be filled by the President of the Friends of RPL. Jenny Hubbard is now the President and the Commissioners are asked to appoint her to this seat. There is no term expiration date.

Commissioner Pierce moved to appoint Jenny Hubbard. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman and passed unanimously.

### **PARKS AND RECREATION**

Ashley Honbarrier applied to fill a seat that will become vacant on December 31, 2021. If appointed, Ms. Honbarrier's term would expire on December 31, 2024.

Commissioner Pierce moved to appoint Ashley Honbarrier followed by a second from Commissioner Greene. The motion carried unanimously.

### **POOLETOWN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE COMMISSIONERS**

Tom Stoner and Dylan Barkley applied to fill two (2) seats and if approved their terms will expire on November 30, 2023.

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Greene seconded and the vote to appoint Tom Stoner and Dylan Barkley carried unanimously.

### **12a. ADDITION**

#### **Approval of Change Order 1 With Carolina Siteworks For Roadway Project (This Item Was Pulled From The Consent Agenda For Discussion)**

County Manager Aaron Church said the budget amendment in the agenda packet should read \$16,987 for both lines (revenue and expenditures) instead of \$12,987.

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Greene seconded and the vote to approve the corrected amount as requested passed unanimously (Commissioner Klusman had left the room and is therefore counted in the affirmative).

**13. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Pierce moved to adjourn at 5:18 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greene and passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn Barger".

Carolyn Barger, MMC, NCMCC  
Clerk to the Board