

**ROCKINGHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING – FEBRUARY 17, 2025 – 6:30 P.M.**

The Rockingham County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on February 17, 2025, 6:30 pm Governmental Center, Commissioners Chambers, North Carolina. Present were, Chairman Kevin Berger, Vice Chairman Houston Barrow, and Commissioners Mark Richardson, Charlie G. Hall, III and Jeffrey Kallam; Lance L. Metzler, County Manager; Clyde Albright, County Attorney; Susan O. Washburn, Clerk to the Board and citizens and members of the news media.

ITEM #1 – MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

Chairman Berger called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

ITEM #2 – INVOCATION

Invocation was given by Pastor James Tharrington

ITEM #3 – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Philip Butler, Rockingham County School Board

ITEM #4 – APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 17, 2025 AGENDA

Vice Chair Barrow moved, Commissioner Richardson seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the February 17, 2025 Agenda with the changes to remove Item #5(D) Consideration of approval of the sewer agreement with the City of Eden for disposal and treatment of the County's Wentworth Sewer System waste. This agreement is a revision to the expired 1998 agreement between Eden and the County.

ITEM #5 – CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Berger explained the items on the Consent Agenda were non-controversial items; however, if anyone had any questions about the items please contact Lance Metzler, the County Manager.

Commissioner Hall moved, Commissioner Kallam seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the items under the Consent agenda.

ITEM # 5(A) – CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE APPOINTMENT FOR CHARLES RAKESTRAW TO THE ROCKINGHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE BOARD OF TRUSTEES. HIS TERM WILL EXPIRE JUNE 2029.

Commissioner Hall moved, Commissioner Kallam seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the appointment for Charles Rakestraw to the Rockingham Community College Board of Trustees. His term will expire June 2029.

ITEM #5(B)(1) – REQUEST APPROVAL OF TAX COLLECTION AND RECONCILIATION REPORTS FOR JANUARY INCLUDING REFUNDS FOR JANUARY 22, 2025 THRU FEBRUARY 3, 2025.

Commissioner Hall moved, Commissioner Kallam seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the Tax Collection and Reconciliation Reports for January including refunds for January 22, 2025 thru February 3, 2025

ITEM #5(B)(2) – REQUEST THE APPOINTMENT OF THE NEW BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW MEMBER. THIS APPOINTMENT WILL BE COMPLETING THE TERM FOR MEMBER CHARLES RAKESTRAW WHICH WILL END MARCH 31, 2025.

Commissioner Hall moved, Commissioner Kallam seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the appointment of Tim Wray to the Board of Equalization and Review. This appointment will be completing the term for member Charles Rakestraw which will end March 31, 2025.

ITEM #5(C)(1) – APPROVAL OF LETTER TO NC DEPARTMENT OF STATE TREASURER, LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION, IN RESPONSE TO THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE CONCERNS THAT WERE IDENTIFIED BASED ON THE INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THE AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AS OF JUNE 30, 2024.

Commissioner Hall moved, Commissioner Kallam seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the letter to the NC Department of State Treasurer, Local Government Commission, in response to the financial performance concerns that were identified based on the information presented in the audited financial statements as of June 30, 2024.

ITEM #5(C)(2) – AMEND THE BUDGET FOR NEW SOFTWARE SUBSCRIPTION THAT MEETS THE GOVERNMENTAL ACCOUNTING STANDARDS BOARD (GASB) NO 96 CRITERIA. FUNDS FOR THE SOFTWARE WAS APPROVED IN THE FY 2025 ADOPTED BUDGET. THIS AMENDMENT ENABLES FULL COMPLIANCE WITH GASB 96 ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING.

Commissioner Hall moved, Commissioner Kallam seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the request to amend the budget for new software subscription that meets Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) No 96 criteria. Funds for the software were approved in the FY 2025 adopted budget. This amendment enables full compliance with GASB 96 Accounting and Reporting.

ITEM #5(C)(3) – APPROPRIATE \$50,000 OF AVAILABLE FUND BALANCE IN THE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TDA) FUND AS APPROVED BY THE TDA BOARD AT THEIR OCTOBER 2, 2024 MEETING. FUNDS ARE FOR MATCHING GRANT FUNDS FROM THE COMPLETE THE TRAILS GRANT PROGRAM FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE JACOBS CREEK BATTEAU RESTORATION PROJECT.

Commissioner Hall moved, Commissioner Kallam seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve to appropriate \$50,000 of available fund balance in the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) Fund as approved by the TDA Board at their October 2, 2024 meeting. Funds are for matching grant funds from the Complete Trails Grant Program for the purpose of the Jacobs Creek Batteau Restoration Project.

ITEM #5(C)(4) – APPROVAL TO USE \$35,000 OF ARTICLE 46 QUARTER-CENT SALES TAX REVENUE TO ADEQUATELY SUPPORT STAFFING NEEDS OF THE CAREER AND TECHNICAL PROGRAMS OFFERED AT RCC'S CENTER FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT.

Commissioner Hall moved, Commissioner Kallam seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve to use \$35,000 of Article 46 Quarter-Cent Sales Tax Revenue to adequately support staffing needs of the Career and Technical Programs offered at RCC's Center for Workforce Development.

ITEM #5(C)(5) – CONSIDER AWARD TO H. M. KERN FOR THE ROCKINGHAM COUNTY LIVESTOCK MARKETING AND EDUCATION PROJECT DESIGN-BUILD PROJECT.

Commissioner Hall moved, Commissioner Kallam seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve to award H. M. Kern the Rockingham County Livestock Marketing and Education Project Design-Build Project.

ITEM #5(D) – CONSIDERATION OF APPROVAL OF THE SEWER AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF EDEN FOR DISPOSAL AND TREATMENT OF THE COUNTY'S WENTWORTH SEWER SYSTEM WASTE. THIS AGREEMENT IS A REVISION TO THE EXPIRED 1998 AGREEMENT BETWEEN EDEN AND THE COUNTY.

This item was removed from the Agenda.

ITEM #5(E) – REQUEST APPROVAL FOR REAPPOINTMENT OF TERRY SHELTON TO THE EDEN PLANNING BOARD TO REPRESENT THE ETJ JURISDICTION. TERM ENDING DECEMBER 2027.

Commissioner Hall moved, Commissioner Kallam seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the reappointment of Terry Shelton to the Eden Planning Board to represent the ETJ Jurisdiction. Term ending December 2027.

ITEM #5(F) – REQUEST APPROVAL FOR APPOINTMENT OF JOHN AND JOYCE PARRISH TO THE ROCKINGHAM COUNTY PLANNING COMMITTEE FOR OLDER ADULTS. THEIR TERMS WILL BE FEBRUARY 17, 2025 THROUGH FEBRUARY 16, 2028.

Commissioner Hall moved, Commissioner Kallam seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the appointment of John and Joyce Parrish to the Rockingham County Planning Committee for Older Adults. Their terms will be February 17, 2025 through February 16, 2028.

ITEM #5(G) – REQUEST APPROVAL FOR REAPPOINTMENT OF BOARD MEMBER TO THE TOWN OF MADISON PLANNING BOARD AS OUT-OF-TOWN MEMBERS AND TWO MEMBERS TO THE BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT AS OUT-OF-TOWN MEMBERS.

Commissioner Hall moved, Commissioner Kallam seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the reappointment of Todd Dalton (Term ends 2/6/2027) to the Town of Madison Planning Board as out-of-town member; and two reappointments to the Town of Madison Board of Adjustment as out-of-town members - Susan Laws (Term ends 2/21/2028); and Eugenia McCollum (Term ends 2/21/2028)

ITEM #6 – PUBLIC COMMENT

County Manager Lance Metzler read the Public Comment protocols.

*Neil Jacques – 260 Chinquapin Trail, Reidsville, spoke to the Commissioners concerning the 15th annual County Food Drive. He said last year they collected 48,907 lbs. of food and \$3,927.00 in

cash donations. He said there were eight agencies they work with: the Salvation Army (pantry in Reidsville and soup kitchen in Eden); Men and Women in Christ in Reidsville; CORMII Community Development in Reidsville; Cornerstone Christian Center in Reidsville; Rockingham County Veterans Coalition in Wentworth; FOCUS (Fostering Opportunities in Communities and Uniting Services in Eden); Cooperative Christian Ministries in Eden; and Hands of God in Madison. He said these are agencies that do a wonderful job distributing the food. Mr. Jacques said that the White Owl National Stoneworks and Rockingham County Office employees have helped this year. He thanked the Commissioners for the support they have gotten through the years.

Mr. Jacques thanked Leaksville Spray Elementary School collected 1,052 lbs. of food which was incredible. He said there was a Boy Scout troop in Madison-Mayodan that collected 838 lbs. of food specifically for the Hands of God. He said the Fire Marshal's office with the help of Melissa Joyce collected 788 lbs. of food in her office. Mr. Jacques said there was a family that did a food drive in their neighborhood and collected 537 lbs. of food; Holmes Middle School collected 500 lbs. of food; and Central Elementary School collected 492 lbs.

*Ann Fish – said they had originally planned to do this for only one year and now 15 years later they are still having the Food Drive. She said she appreciated all the help they have gotten from the County.

ITEM #7(A) – PRESENTATION: REQUEST APPROVAL FOR RFA#2508. THE ROCKINGHAM COUNTY RECOVERS GUEST EVALUATION PANEL MET ON 1-29-2025 AND VOTED TOO UNANIMOUSLY REFER THE RFA#2508 PROPOSAL SUBMITTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO IMPLEMENT A LOCAL NCFIT PROGRAM PROVIDING WRAP AROUND SERVICES TO PERSONS FORMERLY INCARCERATED TO PROMOTE SOBRIETY, PROVIDE RESOURCES TO ADDRESS DDEFICITS IN THEIR SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AND DECREASE UNINTENDED DEATH BY OVERDOSE. THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH IS ASKING FOR \$166,625 PER YEAR FOR 3 YEARS FOR A TOTAL ALLOCATION OF \$499,875.

Ms. Lisa Ellington, RCR Facilitator, spoke to the Commissioners concerning a prior application the was approved in the Fall of the year which was a request of up to \$2,000,000 to be awarded in grant funding with Opioid Settlement money. She said was requesting approval of a proposal that was submitted and has been supported by County Administration as well as a guest panel evaluation committee (this committee was created due county interest so as not to have a conflict of interest and maintain transparency). She said this proposal was submitted by the Rockingham County Department of Public Health to add funding for a position as part of their Medications for Opioid Use Disorder Programing. She said they have partnered with the North Carolina Formerly Incarcerated Transition Program (NCFIT). She said this is an evidence-based model. She said they plan to support reentry by adding a position, Certified Peer Support Specialist. She said they would provide peer support services as well as they would work collaboratively with those treatment programs and community-based programs that assist with substance misuse. Ms. Ellington stated the primary function of the role would be to provide individualized and group support empowering coaching education and case management services to those who are being released from incarceration who suffer from chronic disease, substance use disorder and/or mental illness. She said indicators of success for this project would include the number of formerly incarcerated clients engaged and number of referrals made to needed services including substance misuse treatment and to decrease recidivism. Ms. Ellington said Rockingham County Division of Public Health is uniquely and strategically placed to provide whole patient care in meeting referral needs through primary care, dental care and the MOUD program. She said they

are requesting for that position and for supports for that position \$166,625 per year for 3 years with the total allocation request of \$499,875.

Vice Chair Barrow addressed Ms. Ellington and said that as he understood it, this program was trying to accomplish intercepting people coming out of incarceration who are dealing with Opioid Use Disorder and trying to link them with services provided by the County such primary care and get them involved with the MOUD program in order that they become productive members of society. He said these funds are connected with the Opioid Settlement Funds and this position will not be continued after to complete use of the funds unless the Board decided otherwise.

Ms. Ellington said there would be a prerelease plan that will let us know that the client is being released from incarceration and identify their needs and establish an appointment with Public Health in order to do labs, assessment of their health, discuss their substance use history and if they have had any provision for their substance use disorder that may have been provided during their incarceration in order to continue that treatment. She said obviously other wrap around services would be if they have a home or food supply. Public Health would offer the services they have within their scope and have linked services with other departments within the County for a continuity of care for the client.

Chairman Berger stated that the Commissioners had earmarked around \$700,000 per year towards the Opioid Crisis in the County and with this it would be close to \$900,000 per year.

Vice Chair Barrow moved, Commissioner Hall seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the request of RFA#2508 Proposal submitted by the Department of Public Health to implement a local NCFIT Program providing wrap around services for persons formerly incarcerated to promote sobriety, provide resources to address deficits in their Social Determinants of Health and decrease unintended death by overdose. This will be approval for \$166,625 per year for 3 years for a total allocation of \$499,875.

ITEM #7(B) – PRESENTATION: UPDATES ON THE FY 2025 PROJECTS

Ms. Erselle Young, Assistant Superintendent spoke to the Board to give them an overview of the projects that have been completed at Rockingham County Schools. She updated the Commissioners that the vestibules for the following schools had been completed:

- Bethany Elementary School
- Huntsville Elementary School
- Stoneville Elementary School
- Leaksville-Spray Elementary School
- Lincoln Elementary School
- Monroeton Elementary School
- Moss St. Elementary School
- Williamsburg Elementary School
- Holmes Middle School
- Western Rockingham Middle School

She said they have parking lot lighting projects completed and all schools now have had their intercoms updated which is so important for safety.

Ms. Young informed the Board of elementary school playgrounds that have been updated and various other projects that relate to safety and security enhancements. She also updated the

Board on the roof replacement projects. Ms. Young stated that Central Elementary (Main Building); Lincoln Elementary (Low Slope); Holmes Middle School (2 story buildings) and Reidsville High School (Auditorium Entrance) had all been completed. She also made the Board aware of the HVAC projects that were occurring: Dillard Academy (Completed); Leaksville-Spray Elementary (Phase 1 complete, Phase 2 equipment ordered); Reidsville High School (Phase 2-4 bid are in hand for buildings 100, 200, 300 and Café with bids due at end of month for building 400); and Reidsville High School (Phase 5-6 bids due by end of month).

Mr. Mitch Birgulio, Senior Vice President, Davenport & Company, spoke to the Board about the Capital funding plan. He stated there were two financings involved and discussed the details with the Board.

Chairman Berger said that these projects were on the Capital Improvement Plan that he, Commissioner Hall, and School Board members, Kimberly McMichael and Paula Rakestraw worked hard on to get both boards blessing.

Commissioner Hall thanked Davenport for their guidance and assistance on these projects.

ITEM #7(C) – UPDATE ON IMPROVEMENTS AND CORRECTIONS MADE IN THE JAIL FACILITY AND OPERATION.

Commissioner Hall explained that he requested the Sheriff to come to give updates on the projects that have been completed and the work being done at the jail.

Sheriff Sam Page said that he asked Operational Commander and Chief Deputy, Colonel Grey Smith to put together a report to give an accurate picture of where we are at.

Colonel Smith relayed to the Board that 33 showers have been repaired, the Tilt Skillet has been replaced, the Jockey pump that controlled water pressure for the sinks and showers was removed because it was no longer needed. He said they do have 24/7 nurse coverage in place now at the detention center and the Medication Assisted Treatment Program (MAT) was started February 1st and had one new participant and 2 that are on the continuation of care per ADA compliance. He said they have purchased a CardioCare EKG machine for the nursing staff. Colonel Smith said the sprinkler system had an issue Thursday afternoon with an outside strobe at the Magistrate's office and Johnson Controls has been contacted for repair. He said we do have plenty of spare sprinkler heads available. He said all the lights were working as of today except for one portal lights and we are working with Womack for an LED replacement light fixture. Colonel Smith said they were down six Detention Officers. He said the painting in one Pod has been completed, but due to rise in capacity it has slowed the painting. He said the door repair in H Pod, which is not a security risk, is working on being taken care of. We are having some issues with the Vendor. Colonel Smith stated that he checked two random reports from last week and had a 93% and 91% and the week before had a 98% and a 91% of completed rounds to check on inmates within the timeframes designated. He said there was damage by an inmate to their cell and charges were made and the damages repaired. Colonel Smith said inservice training mandated by the State was completed and the inmates also received training from Southern Health Partners on the implementation of the MAT program. He said they were working with VAYA on some mental health training for staff.

Sheriff Page updated the Commissioners on the BLET (Basic Law Enforcement Training) program. He said the director retired and the Academy class that was supposed to start in January will now hopefully begin in June in order to get new staff certified.

Colonel Smith said he has worked with staff, holding supervisors more accountable, and checking paperwork everyday to ensure that everyone understands the policies and procedures.

Sheriff Page added that they have been working with the County Attorney making sure their documentation and reporting are clear and accurate.

Chairman Berger discussed with Colonel Smith and Sheriff Page concerning what measures had been taken to ensure policies are in place so that the next inspection goes better, as well as policies dealing with the insurance issues that they have had in the past.

ITEM #7(D) – CONSIDER ADOPTION OF ROCKINGHAM COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE SPECIAL REVENUE FUND ORDINANCE, WHICH OUTLINES THE PROCEDURE FOR ANY REVENUE GENERATED BY TELEPHONE AND TECHNOLOGY SERVICE CONTRACTS MUST BE DEPOSITED, BUDGETED, APPROPRIATED, AND EXPENDED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET AND FISCAL CONTROL ACT, G.S. 159-17 1.

County Attorney, Clyde Albright spoke to the Board about a proposed special revenue fund ordinance and asked the Board to consider adopting it. He said it outlines the procedures for any revenue generated by telephone and technology service contracts which must be deposited, appropriated and expended in accordance with NCGS 159-17.1 and to also comply with the Governmental Accounting Standards Board statement 54 (GASB 54). He said this template came from the Sheriff's Association Finance Manual.

Chairman Berger and County Attorney Albright discussed the issues with the contract for the telephone and technology services as well as three others. They went over issues concerning how the contracts had originally been drawn up and signed and Chairman Berger stated that he had asked County Attorney Albright to review and discuss the other contracts at a later date.

Commissioner Hall motioned, Commissioner Richardson seconded, and the vote was unanimous to approve the adoption of the Rockingham County Sheriff's Office Special Revenue Fund Ordinance which outlines the procedure for any revenue generated by telephone and technology service contracts must be deposited, budgeted, appropriated and expended in accordance with the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act, G.S. 159-17.1.

ITEM #8 – NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Berger spoke to the Board about the budget workshop and initial projections from a budget standpoint show the County to be approximately \$3,000,000 due to inflation in the hole. He said one of the things they talked about was retirements, between now and the time budget discussions are held, requesting a freeze be placed on those positions unless deemed critical.

Commissioner Richardson moved, Commissioner Kallam seconded, and the vote was unanimous to approve to put a freeze on retirement positions unless deemed critical as an economy measure to deal with this shortfall and to allow the County Manager to determine whether these positions are to be deemed critical or noncritical.

ITEM #9– COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Kallam – As we approach this week, we look to go into bad weather. I would encourage people to prepare. If you're looking more into ice, flashlights, batteries, water. Also,

take care of your pets. If you're cold outside, I'm sure they are too. Prepare for any weather and if at all possible stay off the roads.

Commissioner Hall – We appreciate everyone who came out tonight and who tuned in. There are a lot of things happening, but I'm tickled to have Ms. Ellington come tonight and talk about this project that we are undertaking. I'm glad to hear that the MAT Program has started at the jail. Rockingham County, for years, has been one of the worst counties for opioid deaths and so as we are working with these things to make that better I appreciate it. I also want to thank Commissioner Houston Barrow for his participation and his efforts on behalf of the community. It just means so much to me to know that we with are dealing with this. Thank you, Commissioner.

Commissioner Richardson – I would like to echo Commissioner Hall's comments. I am glad to see that we had some ongoing action to deal with the Opioid problem. It's not that we were ignoring it. It was just getting an action plan and taking forth what is going on. Several things are going on in addition to that. Our Health Department and certainly Commissioner Barrow with the BHUC. I would also like to commend the food drive that was presented by Ms. Fish and Mr. Jacque and I think that is indicative of the nature of the citizens of this County by their volunteerism and their concern for their fellow citizens. I echo Jeff's comments over there the weather may or may not be bad, but in any event, I encourage you to be prepared. As usual I would like to point out one employee of the County and that's Wanda Lane. She came to us in 1985 and has been working at a variety of things including with our voters. She has been a long time participate in our Veteran's Program. If you talk to anybody that has dealt with Wanda Lane, they talk about her professionalism and how concerned she is. I think our Veteran's Program is in great shape. It's not that we don't want to do better, but she puts forth a maximum effort. She takes care of our Veterans. I'd sure like for all of us, if you see Wanda Lane say something nice to her because she's doing good things for all of us.

Vice Chair Barrow – Thank you Commissioner Hall and thank you Commissioner, I appreciate your recognition. I appreciate that. If anyone is interested in anything pertaining to Opioid Disorders in the County I serve on our Health and Human Services Board, but also on the Rockingham County Recovers Board which meets at the Emergency Services building behind the Sheriff's Office the last Wednesday of every month at 5:30 pm. If you would like to be involved with being part of the solution or if you have concerns or questions, we'd love to have you come out to our meetings. We usually have a packed house. School Board member Butler, back there, has been to many of the meetings and he can attest that it is usually a packed house over there. We do have a lot of people who are concerned about these things in the County. We are trying to work together with non-profits and put the County in with organizations and faith-based organizations to try and bring a solution to the County. I appreciate that recognition from you gentleman. I would like to recognize our elected officials that we had in house tonight, Sheriff Sam Page is with us and Philip Butler from the School Board.

Chairman Berger – Thank everyone for coming out and tuning in. I do want to offer congratulations to Jason Ross. He is the coach to Reidsville High School Basketball team. Jason has been listed on and recognized as an outstanding coach on some lists and Jason works real hard. I appreciate everything he does for the Reidsville community. The team is currently ranked 17th in the Country which is quite a recognition.

ITEM #10 – CLOSED SESSION – PURSUANT TO:

N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(1) APPROVE CLOSED SESSION MINUTES and

N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5) INSTRUCT NEGOTIATING AGENTS

Commissioner Hall moved, Vice Chair Barrow seconded and the vote was unanimous to go into Closed Session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(1) to approve Closed Session Minutes and under Section 143-318.11(a)(5) Instruct Negotiating Agents at 7:44 pm.

Commissioner Hall moved, Commissioner Richardson seconded and the vote was unanimous to come out of Closed Session at 7:55 pm.

ITEM #11 – ADJOURN

Commissioner Richardson moved, Vice Chair Barrow seconded and the vote was unanimous to adjourn at 7:55 pm.

MINUTES READ AND APPROVED,

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED,

**KEVIN BERGER, CHAIRMAN
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**SUSAN O. WASHBURN, CLERK
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**