

**COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**Monday, August 19, 2024**  
**5:30 P.M. – Closed Session**  
**6:30 P.M. – Regular Session**

The Honorable Columbus County Commissioners met on the above stated date and time at the Columbus County Commissioners Chamber, 127 West Webster Street, Whiteville, North Carolina 28472, for the purpose of conducting a Regular Session.

**COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:**  
Ricky Bullard, **Chairman**  
Giles E. Byrd, **Vice Chairman**  
Lavern Coleman,  
Scott Floyd  
Barbara Featherson  
Brent Watts  
Chris Smith

**APPOINTEES PRESENT:**  
Eddie Madden, Jr., **County Manager**  
Amanda B. Prince, **Attorney**  
Jana Nealey, **Clerk to the Board**

**APPOINTEES ABSENT:**

**Agenda Item #1: MEETING CALLED to ORDER:**

At 5:30 P.M. Chairman Ricky Bullard called the regular session meeting to order.

**RECESS REGULAR SESSION and enter into CLOSED SESSION in ACCORDANCE with N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A) (3) ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE**

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Coleman made a motion to recess regular session and enter into closed session, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

**Agenda Item #2: CLOSED SESSION in ACCORDANCE with N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A) (3) ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE.**

**RECESS CLOSED SESSION and enter into REGULAR SESSION**

**MOTION:**

At 5:48 P.M., Commissioner Watts made a motion to recess closed session and enter into regular session, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

**GENERAL ACCOUNT:**

Attorney Amanda Prince gave the general account as follows:

The board discussed (2) matters of Attorney-Client Privilege, no action was taken by the board.

**MOTION:**

Vice Chairman Byrd made a motion to approve the General Account, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

**Chairman Bullard recessed regular session until 6:30 P.M.**

**Regular Session resumes at 6:30 P.M.**

**Agenda Items # 3 and #4: INVOCATION and PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE:**

The invocation was delivered by Commissioner Chris Smith. Everyone in attendance stood and pledged Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America which was led by Commissioner Brent Watts.

**Agenda Item# 5: APPROVAL OF AGENDA, TAX REFUNDS & RELEASES:**

a. 8/19/2024

Tax Refunds and Releases

<i>Refunds</i>					Amount:		\$0.00	
Bell, Ardella					Total:		\$113.00	
Value:	\$0.00	Year:	2024	PROPERTY: 00000	Account:	01-04178	Bill#:	24369
Refund city user fee. Double billed								
<i>Refunds</i>					Amount:		\$0.00	
Cox, Lacy					Total:		\$200.00	
Value:	\$0.00	Year:	2023	PROPERTY: 00000	Account:	09-02635	Bill#:	23144
Refund user fee. Billed for 2 cans incorrectly.								
<i>Refunds</i>					Amount:		\$0.00	
McCollum, Eric					Total:		\$100.00	
Value:	\$0.00	Year:	2024	PROPERTY: 00000	Account:	13-22163	Bill#:	24372
Refund portion of user fee. DW moved.								
<i>Refunds</i>					Amount:		\$0.00	
Ward, Wanda Beth					Total:		\$400.00	
Value:	\$0.00	Year:	23-24	PROPERTY: 00000	Account:	12-00755	Bill#:	99999
Refund user fee. Double billed to land account.								

NAME Fee	Account # Late List	Date District	Amount Released Discount	Property Value TOTAL	Year	Bill#	Property #	User
Bell, Ardella 04178 \$0.00 220 E Virgil Street Whiteville, NC 28472	01- 8/19/2024 \$0.00	 \$0.00 \$113.00	 \$0.00	 2024	243698	 00000	 \$113.00	 \$0.00
Refund city user fee. Double billed								
Cox, Lacy 02635 \$0.00 4875 Will Inman Road Tabor City, NC 28463	09- 8/19/2024 \$0.00	 \$0.00 \$200.00	 \$0.00	 2023	2314482	 00000	 \$200.00	 \$0.00
Refund user fee. Billed for 2 cans incorrectly.								
McCollum, Eric 22163 \$0.00 105 Larilin Drive Whiteville, NC 28472	13- 8/19/2024 \$0.00	 \$0.00 \$100.00	 \$0.00	 2024	2437294	 00000	 \$100.00	 \$0.00
Refund portion of user fee. DW moved.								
Ward, Wanda Beth 24 1357 Old Boardman Road Evergreen, NC 28438	12-00755 99999	8/19/2024 00000	\$0.00 \$400.00	\$0.00 \$0.00	23- \$0.00	 \$0.00	 \$400.00	
Refund user fee. Double billed to land account.								

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Byrd made a motion to approve the Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #6: **BOARD MINUTES APPROVAL:**

- a. August 05, 2024 Regular Session
- b. July 31, 2024 Emergency Called Meeting

MOTION:

Commissioner Featherson made a motion to approve seconded by Commissioner Coleman. The motion unanimously passed

Agenda Item #7: **PUBLIC INPUT:**

NO PUBLIC INPUT

Agenda Item #8: **ADMINISTRATION – ADOPTION of the PROCLAMATION of APPRECIATION for the INDIVIDUALS who ASSISTED DURING the STORM:**

County Manager Eddie Madden and the Governing Body is requested adoption of the proclamation of appreciation for those who assisted Columbus County during storm Debby.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Byrd made a motion to approve seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

*Proclamation of Appreciation*

Whereas, Recently, our community faced Tropical Storm Debbie that brought significant challenges and disruptions; and

Whereas, during this time of crisis, many individuals selflessly offered their time, skills, and resources to assist those in need, demonstrating exceptional courage, compassion, and commitment to the well-being of others; and

Whereas, these individuals provided vital services, including but not limited to, emergency response, medical assistance, shelter provision, debris removal, and emotional support; and

Whereas, their efforts were instrumental in ensuring the safety, recovery, and resilience of our community during and after the storm; and

Whereas, their actions reflect the highest values of our community and serve as an inspiration to all;

Now, Therefore, We, the Columbus County Board of Commissioners, do hereby express our deepest gratitude and appreciation to all those who assisted during the storm, recognizing their invaluable contributions and unwavering dedication.

APPROVED and ADOPTED this the 19<sup>th</sup>, day of August, 2024

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**Agenda Item #9: PRESENTATION - FY 22/23 AUDIT PRESENTATION:**

CPA and Director of Mauldin & Jenkins, LeAnn Bagasala presented the FY 22-23 Audit Report.

***THE FULL FY 22/23 AUDIT REPORT IS HOUSED IN THE CLERK’S OFFICE***



**Board of Commissioners**  
**Columbus County, North Carolina**  
**Whiteville, North Carolina**

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements of **Columbus County, North Carolina** (the "County") as of and for the year ended June 30, 2023, in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, we considered the County's internal control over financial reporting (the "internal control") as a basis for designing our auditing procedures for the purpose of expressing our opinion on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the County's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the County's internal control.

However, during our audit we became aware of several matters that are opportunities for strengthening internal controls and operating efficiency. This letter includes comments and suggestions with respect to matters that came to our attention in connection with our audit of the financial statements of the County as of and for the year ended June 30, 2023. A separate report dated July 30, 2024, contains our report on material weaknesses in the County's internal control. This letter does not affect our report dated July 30, 2024, on the financial statements of the County.

The following items are offered as constructive suggestions to be considered as part of the ongoing process of modifying and improving the County's practices and procedures:

1. During the previous two fiscal years, the County was required to implement the provisions of two pronouncements issued by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) which have introduced a new class of capital assets. GASB Statement No. 87, *Leases*, and GASB Statement No. 96, *Subscription-Based Information Technology Arrangements (SBITAs)*, require governments to recognize right-to-use assets in conjunction with leases and SBITAs. As with most state and local governments now, these standards will continue to impact the County accounting and financial reporting in future periods. To assist with efficiency and to ensure consistency going forward, we recommend the County implement a capitalization threshold for these right-to-use assets. A threshold for right-to-use assets will create efficiencies for the accounting and financial reporting processes and ensuring consistency from fiscal period to fiscal period. The County uses \$5,000 as their capitalization threshold for their tangible assets.
2. During our documentation and review of the County's internal controls, we had management of the County complete internal control questionnaires related to the County's main transaction cycles. In the following areas, it was noted the County has difficulty segregating duties due to the limited size of the Finance Department:
  - a. Related to the County's financial close cycle, there is not adequate segregation of duties among County employees who initiate, approve and post journal entries.

Although the County's financials do not contain material misstatements or indicators of management override of internal controls, we recommend the County take extra precautions to ensure adequate internal controls over processes, especially those related to recording of journal entries. Furthermore, where it is not possible for the County to achieve true segregation of duties, we recommend the County implement mitigating controls and involve the Board of Commissioners where necessary to ensure the County's assets are protected. We also recommend that the County create a purchasing manager that is separate from the finance department and reports to the County manager.

3. During the process of gaining an understanding of the County's internal controls and related processes/procedures, we noted that the County does not have a formal change management policy or computer/network usage policy. Additionally, the County does not have procedures in place like an onboarding and offboarding checklist to ensure timely action is taken related to requesting, establishing, issuing, suspending, modifying, and closing user accounts, including appropriate authorization. We recommend that the County create these formal policies and procedures as soon as possible.
4. During the process of gaining an understanding of the County's internal controls and related processes/procedures, we noted that the County does not have an updated personnel policy that includes all departments. We recommend that the County update their personnel policy as soon as possible and include any changes necessary for GASB 101, *Compensated Absences*, implementation that is effective for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025.
5. During our testing of disbursements, we noted seven out of twenty-five purchase orders that were dated after the invoice date. N.C. General Statute 159 requires a pre-audit for all bills, invoices, or other claims against a local government. We recommend the County ensure that all purchases of the County, including those from the Sheriff Office, requiring a pre-audit to be approved by the Finance Director prior to spending of County funds.
6. During our testing of cash, we noted checks outstanding in the County's general fund bank account were older than one year. Under N.C. General Statute 116B, unclaimed property holders (the County in this case) are required to report and remit unclaimed property on an annual basis after a dormancy period (one year for wages, payroll or salary) is met. The unclaimed property reporting deadline for North Carolina is October 31st. We recommend the County put into place processes and controls to ensure the timely filing of the unclaimed property report by October 31st of each year.
7. During discussions with Management and testing of tax revenues and receivables, we noted the tax reports generated in the BIS system required revisions prior to testing. There were instances in the current year and prior years where the BIS system allocated discounts or revenue to the wrong fund and manual journal entries were required to address these issues. We recommend that the County work with the BIS system administrator to resolve these issues and ensure the reports generated from the system are accurate and agree to the County's general ledger.
8. From an overall standpoint as it relates to the audit delay, we noted the fiscal year end June 30, 2023 audit required numerous journal entries to adjust the books and records of the County as provided to Mauldin and Jenkins. As indicated in the audit report, the journal entries were due to lack of review and controls surrounding the close out of the fiscal year as well as prior period adjustments. We recommend the County create a close out process that ensures review of all balances are properly supported and reported.

9. During preparation of the financial statements and as disclosed in footnote 2 of the annual financial report, there are several annually budgeted funds with fund deficits. We recommend the County review all funds with fund deficits and properly budget any transfer of funds needed from the general fund to elevate the fund deficits.

Closing Thoughts

We have already discussed many of these comments and suggestions with various County personnel, and we will be pleased to discuss them in further detail at your convenience, to perform any additional study of these matters, or to assist you in implementing the recommendations.

This communication is intended solely for the information and use of management, the Board of Commissioners, and others within the County, and is not intended to be, and should not be, used by anyone other than those specified parties.

We appreciate serving Columbus County, North Carolina and would be happy to assist you in addressing and implementing any of the suggestions in this letter.

Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC

Raleigh, North Carolina  
July 30, 2024

Agenda Item #10: ADMINISTRATION – APPROVAL of the FY 22/23 AUDIT and APPROVAL of the AMENDED FY 22/23 CONTRACT: County Manager Eddie Madden is requested approval of the following:

- a. FY 22/23 Audit
- b. FY 22/23 Amended Contract from \$130,000 to \$145,000 for additional services

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Byrd made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

THE FULL FY 22/23 AUDIT REPORT IS HOUSED IN THE CLERK’S OFFICE

LGC-205 AmendmentAMENDMENT TO CONTRACT TO AUDIT ACCOUNTSRev. 11/2023

Whereas

Primary Government Unit  
County Commissioners

and

Discretely Presented Component Unit (DPCU) (if applicable)  
N/A

and

Auditor  
Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC

entered into a contract in which the Auditor agreed to audit the accounts of the Primary Government Unit and DPCU (if applicable)

for

Fiscal Year Ending  
06/30/23

and originally to be submitted to the LGC on

Date  
10/30/23

hereby agree that it is now necessary that the contract be modified as follows.

☐ Modification to date submitted to LGC

Original date  
10/30/23

Modified date

☒ Modification to fee

Original fee  
\$ 130,000.00

Modified fee  
\$ 145,000.00

Primary  
(choose 1)

Other  
(choose 0-2)

Reason(s) for Contract Amendment

☒ ☐ Change in scope

☐ ☐ Issue with unit staff/turnover/workload

☐ ☐ Issue with auditor staff/turnover/workload

☐ ☐ Third-party financial statements not prepared by agreed-upon date

☐ ☐ Unit did not have bank reconciliations complete for the audit period

☐ ☐ Unit did not have reconciliations between subsidiary ledgers and general ledger complete

☐ ☐ Unit did not post previous years adjusting journal entries resulting in incorrect beginning balances in the general ledger

☐ ☐ Unit did not have information required for audit complete by the agreed-upon time

☐ ☐ Delay in component unit reports

☐ ☐ Software - implementation issue

☐ ☐ Software - system failure

☐ ☐ Software - ransomware/cyberattack

☐ ☐ Natural or other disaster

☐ ☒ Other (please explain)

Plan to Prevent Future Late Submissions

If the amendment is submitted to modify the date the audit will be submitted to the LGC, please indicate the steps the unit and auditor will take to prevent late filing of audits in subsequent years. Audits are due to the LGC four months after fiscal year end. Indicate NA if this is an amendment due to a change in cost only.

Not applicable.

Additional Information


Please provide any additional explanation or details regarding the contract modification.

Scope change includes an additional single audit program required to be audited above the five single audit programs included in the engagement letter. Additionally, issues with the tax software caused additional time to be incurred above planned time to complete testing.

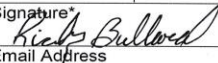
By their signatures on the following pages, the Auditor, the Primary Government Unit, and the DPCU (if applicable), agree to these modified terms.

**SIGNATURE PAGE**

**AUDIT FIRM**

Audit Firm* Mauldin & Jenkins, LLC	
Authorized Firm Representative* (typed or printed) LeAnn Bagasala	Signature* 
Date* 07/25/24	Email Address lbagasala@mjcpa.com

**GOVERNMENTAL UNIT**

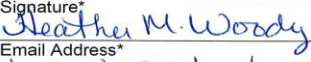
Governmental Unit* County Commissioners	
Date Primary Government Unit Governing Board Approved Amended Audit Contract* (If required by governing board policy)	8/19/2024
Mayor/Chairperson* (typed or printed) Ricky Bullard	Signature* 
Date 8-19-2024	Email Address jona.nealey@columbusco.org

Chair of Audit Committee (typed or printed, or "NA")	Signature
Date	Email Address

**GOVERNMENTAL UNIT – PRE-AUDIT CERTIFICATE**  
**\*ONLY REQUIRED IF FEES ARE MODIFIED IN THE AMENDED CONTRACT\***  
*(Pre-audit certificate not required for hospitals)*

Required by G.S. 159-28(a1) or G.S. 115C-441(a1)

*This instrument has been pre-audited in the manner required by The Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act or by the School Budget and Fiscal Control Act.*

Primary Governmental Unit Finance Officer* Heather M. Woody	Signature* 
Date of Pre-Audit Certificate* 8-20-2024	Email Address* hwoody@columbusco.org

**Agenda Item #11: ADMINISTRATION - APPROVAL of the RESOLUTION DECLARING the PICKNEY STREET BUILDING as SURPLUS PROPERTY to LEASE:** County Manager Eddie Madden is requested approval of the resolution declaring the Pickney Street building as surplus property to lease.

**MOTION:**  
Commissioner Featherson made a motion to approve, seconded by Vice Chairman Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

**RESOLUTION DECLARING SURPLUS PROPERTY and AUTHORIZING LEASE**

**WHEREAS**, the County of Columbus owns property located, attached and incorporated herein; and

**WHEREAS**, the property is currently surplus property for the County; and

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina General Statute § 160A-272 permits the County to lease or rent property for such terms and upon such conditions as the council may determine;

**THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF COLUMBUS RESOLVES THAT:**

The Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the declaration that the 810 Pinckney Street, Whiteville, NC 28472 property is surplus and permits leasing such property on conditions to be determined.

Adopted this the 19<sup>th</sup>, day of August, 2024.

**COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**Agenda Item #12: TRANSPORTATION – APPROVAL of the UPDATED TITLE VI PLAN:**  
Transportation Director Joy Jacobs is requested approval of the updated Title VI Plan. The updates reflect changes to names and organizational charts made by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB).

**MOTION:**



Commissioner Featherson made a motion to approve, seconded by Vice Chairman Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

PLAN REVIEW AND APPROVAL

On behalf of the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County for Columbus County Transportation (CCT), I hereby acknowledge receipt of the Title VI Nondiscrimination Plan. We, the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County, have **reviewed and hereby approve** this Plan. We are committed to ensuring that all decisions are made in accordance with the nondiscrimination guidelines of this Plan, to the end the no person is excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or otherwise subjected to discrimination under any CCT transportation services and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, or disability, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the nondiscrimination provisions of the Federal Transit Administration.

  
Chairman of Columbus County Board of Commissioners

8-19-24  
DATE

**Agenda Item #13: SHERIFF’S OFFICE – APPROVAL to FILL a VACANT LIEUTENANT POSITION WITH a GRANT WRITER/GRANT MANAGER:** Sheriff’s Office Logistics Captain Robert Creech requested approval to fill a vacant Lieutenant position with a Grant Writer/Grant Manager.

**MOTION:**  
Commissioner Floyd made a motion to approve, **the motion is denied for lack of second.**

**Agenda Item #14: SOIL and WATER CONSERVATION – APPROVAL to ACCEPT the STREAMFLOW REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (STRAP) GRANT in the AMOUNT of \$148,878 and ASSOCIATED PROJECT ORDINANCE:** Soil and Water Conservation District Director Morgan Hayes requested approval to accept the StRAP Grant in the amount of \$148,878 and associated project ordinance to be used for the clearing of debris that has blocked streams and drainage ways in Columbus County.

**MOTION:**  
Vice Chairman Byrd made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watts. The motion unanimously passed.



Steve Troxler  
Commissioner

North Carolina Department of Agriculture  
and Consumer Services

N. David Smith  
Chief Deputy Commissioner

August 7, 2024

Tyler Hodge  
Columbus SWCD  
45 Government Complex Rd. Suite B  
Whiteville, NC 28472

NOTIFICATION OF FUNDING OFFER

Dear Tyler Hodge,

On behalf of Commissioner Steve Troxler and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services – Division of Soil & Water Conservation, I am pleased to inform you that \$143,878.00 for your project, StreamFlow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP), was approved.


The original contract packet must be completed and returned to the NCDA&CS, making sure that the contracts and certain forms have been signed, dated, and witnessed. Since this is a witness contract, there are two (2) options to complete the contract. It is acceptable to have everyone sign the contract electronically or submit two (2) original signed contracts. Depending on the method you choose, please return as shown below:

<u>Electronic Signed Contract:</u> Matt Safford StRAP Manager <a href="mailto:Matt.safford@ncagr.gov">Matt.safford@ncagr.gov</a>	<u>Original signatures mail:</u> Matt Safford, StRAP Manager N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, Division Name 1614 Mail Service Center Raleigh, NC 27699-1614
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By completing these documents, you are agreeing to the specific stipulations, the general terms and conditions and specific reporting requirements. All authorized representative signatures must be in **blue or black** ink. Please use the Contract Check Off List to ensure all attachments are included and are in the correct order for each contract packet. **Failure to complete and return the contract packets within 60 days of this letter or the deadline of any written extension provided will result in funding cancellation for the project.**

One fully-executed, an original contract will be returned to you for your records. If you have any questions about your contract or any of the forms contained in your offer packet, please call Heather Reichert at 919-707-3768, or feel free to send an email to [heather.reichert@ncagr.gov](mailto:heather.reichert@ncagr.gov).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for participating in the StreamFlow Rehabilitation Program (StRAP).

  
Sincerely,  
N. David Smith  
Chief Deputy Commissioner

**Ordinance making appropriations to the  
Streamflow Rehabilitation Program Round 2  
Capital Project Fund  
for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2024**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County, North Carolina as follows:

**Section 1:** The following amounts are hereby made to the Streamflow Rehabilitation Program Round 2 Capital Project pursuant to G.S. 159 -13.2 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024.

Source of Revenue	
19-3545-432330 StRAP Grant- Round 2	\$ 143,878.00
Total Estimated Revenues – Streamflow Rehabilitation Program 2	\$ 143,878.00
Project Appropriations	
19-4546-519001 Contracted Services – StRAP Grant- Round 2	\$ 143,878.00
Total Project Appropriations – Streamflow Rehabilitation Program 2	\$ 143,878.00

Description: The Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP) allocates money for projects that protect and restore the integrity of drainage infrastructure. Columbus County received funds to complete vegetative debris removal. The Project will include the clearing of debris that has blocked streams and drainage ways. Applicants receiving funds for removing debris from streams must ensure that the extracted debris is either removed from the 100-year floodplain (according to FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps) or processed in such a manner that debris would not pose a risk of blockage or significant impairment of normal streamflow during a subsequent flood event.

Section 2: The project undertaken pursuant to this ordinance is in accordance with the Recommended Budget and any changes made during the County Commissioners' budget work sessions.

Section 3: The Finance Director is hereby directed to maintain within the Capital Project Fund sufficient specific detailed accounting records to satisfy all applicable regulations. The terms of any financing agreement also shall be met.

Section 4: The County desires to expend its own funds for the purpose of paying certain costs of various projects, for which expenditures the County reasonably expects to reimburse itself from the proceeds of debt to be incurred by the County.

Section 5: All expenditures relating to obtaining any bond referendum and or installment purchase will be reimbursed from bond proceeds and installment purchase proceeds in accordance with the requirements of the United States Treasury Regulations Section 1.150 -2.

Section 6: This declaration of official intent is made pursuant to Section 1.150-2 of the Treasury Regulations to expressly declare the official intent of the County to reimburse itself from the proceeds of debt to be hereinafter incurred by the County for certain expenditures paid by the County on or after the date which is sixty (60) days prior to the date hereof.

Section 7: The County intends to seek Federal, State, and/or other grant funding to reduce the amount of loan proceeds. The adoption of this ordinance authorizes the County Manager and/or his representative to apply for and accept such funding if awarded.

Section 8: This project ordinance shall be entered in the minutes of the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County. Within five days hereof, copies of this ordinance shall be filed with the finance office in Columbus County, and with the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County. Copies of the Capital Project



<b>BUDGET AMENDMENT</b>				FY 23/24
<b>Budget Amendment:</b> Health				
<b>County Head Signature:</b> Jennifer Smith 06/25/24				
<b>Date Received:</b> August 5, 2024				<b>Date Received:</b> _____
Budget Code and Dept. Category		EXPENDITURES Classification	Requested Increase or Decrease	
10	5126	512100 Public Health Infrastructure Salaries and Wages	\$150,000	
10	5126	512700 Public Health Infrastructure Longevity	\$2,500	
10	5126	518100 Public Health Infrastructure FICA	\$10,000	
10	5126	518302 Public Health Infrastructure Retirement	\$10,000	
10	5126	518300 Public Health Infrastructure Insurance	\$15,000	
10	5126	518810 Public Health Infrastructure Christmas Bonus	\$1,000	
10	5126	525105 Public Health Infrastructure Gas	\$1,000	
10	5126	526001 Public Health Infrastructure Departmental Supplies	\$70,000	
10	5126	531100 Public Health Infrastructure Travel	\$5,424	
<b>Total Net Expense</b>				<b>\$264,924</b>
Budget Code and Dept. Category		REVENUES Classification	Requested Increase or Decrease	
10	3510	440123 Public Health Infrastructure State Fund	\$264,924	
<b>Total Net Revenue</b>				<b>\$264,924</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> This budget revision has been approved by the Columbus County Finance Office: <input type="checkbox"/> This budget revision has been approved by the Columbus County County Manager: <input type="checkbox"/> This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on: _____				

signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Explanation of Increase or Decrease**  
**Additional State Funding FY24/25**

**Agenda Item #16: HEALTH SERVICES – DISCUSSION of INFORMATION REGARDING TROPICAL STORM DEBBY RESPONSE-WELL WATER TESTING:**

Health Services Director Kim Smith discussed information regarding free well water testing that the state is offering for free.

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watts. The motion unanimously passed.



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Public Health

**ROY COOPER** • Governor  
**KODY H. KINSLEY** • Secretary  
**MARK BENTON** • Chief Deputy  
Secretary for Health  
**KELLY KIMPLE** • Acting Director, Division of Public Health  
**SCOTT M. SHONE, PhD, HCLD (ABB)** • Laboratory Director, State  
Laboratory of Public Health

# Memo

**To:** Local Health Departments  
**From:** Scott M. Shone, PhD, HCLD(ABB), Laboratory Director  
**Date:** August 9, 2024  
**Re:** Tropical Storm Debby Response – Well Water Testing

In response to the flooding associated with Tropical Storm Debby, the North Carolina State Laboratory of Public Health (NCSLPH) will provide well water sampling kits at no charge to Local Health Departments impacted by the storm. These kits are to be used solely for determining the presence of coliform bacteria and *E. coli* in existing private drinking water wells following disinfection.

“Storm Response” sample collection kits will include a sample collection bottle and laboratory requisition form that are each uniquely labeled to indicate the testing requested is for recovered potable wells. These kits are **NOT** to be used for routine well water certification analyses.

The free post-storm sampling kits can be ordered from the NCSLPH [Supply Ordering Portal](#) by selecting “STORM RESPONSE WELL WATER MICROBIOLOGY TOTAL COLIFORM/E.COLI P/A.”

**ARTICLE I Sample Collection and Shipping Guidelines**

Post-flood well water samples should only be collected following performance of the recovery steps described in the Department’s [How to Keep Wells Safe Before and After Flood](#) guidance. Well water samples for coliform testing may be collected and shipped to the laboratory by state courier, FedEx or UPS. Laboratory testing must begin within 30 hours of collection time, so please plan shipments accordingly. Samples should be collected and shipped Monday through Wednesday.

If you have questions, please contact Chris Goforth, Environmental Sciences Laboratory Unit Manager, at [chris.goforth@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:chris.goforth@dhhs.nc.gov) or 919-733-7308.

**Agenda Item #17: ATTORNEY’S OFFICE – APPROVAL of the RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PARTICIPATION in the TYCO BASF SETTLEMENT REGARDING PFAS LITIGATION:** Attorney Amanda Prince requested approval of the resolution authorizing Columbus County to participate in the Tyco BASF Settlement regarding the PFAS Litigation.

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Featherson made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watts. The motion unanimously passed.

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE COUNTY OF COLUMBUS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROPOSED CLASS ACTION SETTLEMENTS WITH TYCO FIRE PRODUCTS LP, INDIVIDUALLY AND AS SUCCESSOR IN INTEREST TO THE ANSUL COMPANY AND CHEMGUARD, INC. (HEREINAFTER REFERRED TO AS “TYCO DEFENDANTS”) AND BASF CORPORATION IN THE PUBLIC WATER SYSTEMS’ PORTION OF THE MULTI-DISTRICT LITIGATION MATTER, IN RE: AQUEOUS FILM-FORMING FOAMS PRODUCT LIABILITY LITIGATION, MDL 2:18-MN-2873-RMG, RELATING TO PFAS CONTAMINATION OF DRINKING WATER; AUTHORIZING ATTORNEY AMANDA PRINCE TO COMPLETE ALL DOCUMENTATION AND EXECUTE ALL RELEASES AND AGREEMENTS NECESSARY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SETTLEMENT WITH TYCO AND BASF CORPORATION IN THE WATER PROVIDERS’ PORTION OF THE MDL; AND AUTHORIZING OUTSIDE COUNSEL TO CONTINUE TO PURSUE LITIGATION RELATED TO PFAS; PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

WHEREAS, on December 7, 2018, litigation involving the contamination of water and soil by Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances manufactured by various entities was consolidated in the United States District Court of South Carolina as In Re: Aqueous Film-Forming Foams Product Liability Litigation, MDL 2:18-mn-2873-RMG, before the Honorable Richard M. Gergel; and

WHEREAS, settlements have been filed on behalf of manufacturers Tyco Defendants and BASF Corporation to compensate public water systems, including COUNTY OF COLUMBUS, for the contamination and remediation of PFAS; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNTY OF COLUMBUS that this BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS;

Section 1. Approves and incorporates the foregoing recital as if fully set forth herein.

Section 2. Authorizes the THE COUNTY OF COLUMBUS to participate in the proposed Class Action Settlements with Tyco Defendants and BASF Corporation, in the Public Water Systems’ portion of the Multidistrict litigation matter, In Re: Aqueous Film-Forming Foams Product Liability Litigation, MDL 2:18-mn-2873-RMG, relating to PFAS contamination of drinking water (hereinafter, the “MDL”).

Section 3. Authorizes Outside Counsel to complete all documentation required to participate in the Tyco Defendants and BASF Corporation Settlements for the Public Water Systems’ portion of the MDL, such as Claims Forms, and designates ATTORNEY AMANDA PRINCE to verify claims on behalf of THE COUNTY OF COLUMBUS.

Section 4. Authorizes ATTORNEY AMANDA PRINCE to: (a) verify and approve documentation required to participate in the Tyco Defendants and BASF Corporation Settlements for the Public Water Systems’ portion of the MDL, such as Claims Forms, that is completed as authorized in Section 3; and (b) execute all releases and agreements necessary to finalize settlements of the Public Water Systems’ portion of the MDL with Tyco Defendants and BASF Corporation on behalf of the COUNTY OF COLUMBUS

Section 5. Authorizes Outside Counsel to: (a) continue litigating the THE COUNTY OF COLUMBUS’s claims against the defendants remaining in the Public Water Systems’ portion of the MDL; and (b) continue pursuing litigation against any and all defendants, including Tyco Defendants

and BASF Corporation, that may be liable for damages to the THE COUNTY OF COLUMBUS that extend beyond the THE COUNTY OF COLUMBUS's drinking water supply.

This resolution shall become effective on the 19<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2024.

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

**Agenda Item #18: ATTORNEY’S OFFICE – APPROVAL of the FARMERS’ MARKET CONTRACT:**  
Attorney Amanda Prince requested approval of the Farmers’ Market Contract extension for a term of one year.

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Watts made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Coleman. The motion unanimously passed.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF COLUMBUS

LEASE

THIS LEASE. made and entered into this the 19<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2024

by and between COLUMBUS COUNTY. hereinafter called "Lessor" and  
COLUMBUS COUNTY COMMUNITY FARMERS MARKET, INC., hereinafter  
called "Lessee".

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, Lessor has agreed to lease a certain parcel of land to Lessee; and WHEREAS, Lessee will receive certain monies from various agencies of government for the improvement of the said property.

Now therefore, BE IT RESOLVED, CONTRACTED and AGREED, for and in consideration of the premises and covenants which are to be performed by the parties hereto and the sum of one dollar (\$ 1.00) and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, as follows:

- I.

Description. Lessor does demise and let to Lessee and Lessee does hire and take as tenants of Lessor, the following described real estate:
- All that certain lot, tract and parcel of land as shown and delineated on the plat prepared by Billy M. Duncan, RLS, a copy of which is attached hereto and made a part hereof and reference is hereby made to the said plat for more clarity and particularity of description of the land, which is also located in or near Whiteville, North Carolina.
2.

Term and Rent. The length of this Lease is for a term of one (1) year, beginning August 19, 2024. As the rental for said term, the amount will be one dollar (\$1.00) per year, payable yearly in advance on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of August of each calendar year to Lessor, at the Columbus County Finance Office to any person designated as agent to accept said rental payment.
3.

Use. The said property is to be used by Lessee as an area for the sale and/or resale of produce and other crops, crafts and/or art and for whatever use the Lessee deems appropriate that supports the charitable purpose of the Lessee.

- 4 Subletting and Assignments. Without the expressed written permission of Lessor, Lessee shall not sublease the said premises or any part thereof. Consent of Lessor to one subletting or assigning shall not be deemed to be consent to any subsequent subletting or assigning to another person. Assignment of spaces and agreements of selling schedules by designated vendors of Lessee shall not be considered as subletting, nor shall these assignments of spaces or agreements between Lessee and any vendor be binding on Lessor, should Lessor terminate this Lease prior to the expiration of the Lease term. Periodical renting of facilities on said premises shall not be a violation of this subletting clause and shall not require permission from Lessor.

5. Entry for Inspection, Repairs and Alterations. Lessor shall have the right to enter the said premises for inspection at all reasonable hours.
6. Utilities. All utilities, including but not limited to electrical, gas, water and sewer, are the responsibility of Lessee and such expenses shall be bore solely by Lessee and are not furnished as part of this Lease.
7. Capital Improvements, Repairs, Redecoration and Alterations. All capital improvement plans shall be approved by Lessor through the Columbus County Board of Commissioners prior to commencement of the improvement. All non-capital improvement or alteration plans shall be approved by the Lessor through the Columbus County Manager prior to commencement of the improvement or alteration.

Any structure on said premises may be demolished only after receiving approval from Lessor through the Columbus County Board of Commissioners. All demolished structures shall be disposed of in accordance with the laws and regulations of Columbus County and the State of North Carolina.

In the event of termination of this Lease by Lessee, all capital improvements and alterations shall become the property of Lessor. All personal property and fixtures removable without damage to said premises may be removed by Lessee.

Consent to any' particular alteration. addition or change shall not constitute a waiver of consent to any future or additional alteration. addition or change.

8. Animals. Lessee shall keep no domestic or other animals or fowl in or about the said premises without the expressed written permission of Lessor through the Columbus County Manager, except any animal temporarily placed daily on the premises as part of the business activities of Lessee.
9. Prohibited Activities, Waste, Nuisance, Unlawful Use, and Maintenance of Property. Lessee agrees that it shall not permit waste on the said premises or maintain or permit to be maintained a nuisance thereon, or permit the premises to be used for any unlawful act or purpose. There shall not be any abusive or vulgar or profane language used on the said premises, nor shall there be any alcoholic beverages consumed or used on the on the said premises. Lessee shall keep the grounds in acceptable condition and the grass mowed and clean of trash.
10. Quit. The parties agree that any holding over by Lessee under this Lease, without the expressed written permission and consent of Lessor, shall be a tenancy at will, which may be terminated by Lessee on seven (7) days' notice. It is further agreed by Lessee and Lessor that in this event this Lease is a lease from month-to-month and may be terminated under North Carolina law by seven (7) days' notice to Lessee by Lessor.
- 11 Re-delivery of the Premises. At the end of the term(s) of this Lease, the Lessee shall quit and deliver up the premises to Lessor in as good a condition as they were at the beginning of the initial ten of the Lease. ordinary wear and tear excepted, decay and other damage of elements excepted. Also see paragraph 7 above.
12. Default. If Lessee defaults in the payment of the rents or any part thereof at any time herein before specified or if Lessee defaults in the performance of or compliance with any other provision, term,



condition or statement hereof, this Lease, at the option of Lessor, shall be terminated and be forfeited and Lessor may re-enter the said premises and retake possession and recover damages, including the cost and reasonable attorney fees to be accessed by the court. Lessee shall be given twenty (20) days' notice of any default or breach and termination or forfeiture of this Lease, Lessee shall have twenty (20) days from the date of the notice to correct the default or breach or take action reasonably and likely to affect such correction. Lessee’s failure to do so will result in the termination of this Lease.

13. Delay in or Impossibility of Delivery of Possession. In the event that possession cannot be delivered to Lessee on the commencement of the leased term, through no fault of Lessor or its agent, there shall be no liability on Lessor or its agent's part, but the rental herein shall abate until such possession is given. Lessor or its agent shall have thirty (30) days in which to give possession, and if possession is tendered within such time. Lessee agrees to accept the leased premises and to pay the rental herein provided from that date. In the event that possession can-not be delivered within such time, through no fault of Lessor or its agent, then this Lease and all rights hereunder shall at that time be terminated.
14. Binding Effect. The covenants and conditions herein contained shall apply to and bind the legal representatives, successors and assigns of the parties hereto and all covenants are to be construed as conditions to this Lease.

Compliance. Lessee shall comply with all local, county, state and federal rules, statutes and regulations and shall not discriminate against any person, business or corporation on the basis of sex, religion, creed, national origin, race or age.

**Agenda Item #19: EMERGENCY SERVICES – APPROVAL of the MEMORANDUM of UNDERSTANDING (MOA) with ROBESON COUNTY FOR MUTUAL AID:** Emergency Services Director David Ransom requested approval of the MOU with Robeson County for Mutual Aid.

MOTION:

Vice Chairman Byrd made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

**Agenda Item #20: EMERGENCY SERVICES – APPROVAL of the NORTH CAROLINA CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT AGREEMENT and ASSOCIATED PROJECT ORDINANCE:** Emergency Services Director David Ransom requested approval of the North Carolina Capacity Building Grant in the amount of \$185,000, grant agreement, and the associated project ordinance. This grant will be used for hiring an engineer to prepare permitting specifications on all of the emergency shelter locations.

MOTION:

Commissioner Watts made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

**\*\*THE FULL GRANT AGREEMENT (MOA) IS HOUSED IN THE CLERK’S OFFICE**

**BUDGET AMENDMENT**

FY 24/25

Name of Department:

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Agency Head Signature:

Date Prepare / Submitted to Admin:

August 13, 2024

Date Received in Admin:

Budget Code			EXPENDITURES		Requested
Fund	Dept	Category	Classification	Increase or (Decrease)	
10	4330	519002	CONTRACTED SERVICES - GRANTS		\$185,000

			Total Net Expense		\$185,000

Budget Code			REVENUES				Requested	
Fund	Dept	Category	Classification			Increase or (Decrease)		
10	3433	436020	GRANTS			\$185,000		
				Total Net Revenue		\$185,000		

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☐ This budget revision has been approved by the Columbus County Finance Office:

☐ This budget revision has been approved by the Columbus County County Manager:

☒ This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on:

Signature	Date

**Explanation of Increase or Decrease:**

## CREATING BUDGET FOR EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT CAPACITY BUILDING COMPETITIVE GRANT

**Agenda Item #21: DSS – MONTHLY UPDATE:**

Social Services Director Dwella Hall presented the monthly Social Services update.

## Monthly Administrative Update

**For July, 2024**

## August 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024 Meeting

On July 10<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Opioid Steering Committee meeting.

For the remainder of the month, various boards I serve on canceled their meetings and will resume meeting again in August. As July starts our new fiscal year, I made some organizational changes to our agency to help the agency flow more efficiently and ensure we maximize our money.

Effective July 1 the following changes were implemented:

- For the past 15 years our Crisis Intervention Program and Low Income Energy Program was being housed under The Program Integrity Unit. The Program Integrity unit is a unit of three employees and they are responsible for investigating fraudulent cases. They were also given the responsibility to work the energy programs. After much conversation with our Local Business Liaison Mrs. Amber Razor, she explained how detrimental it is for our Program Integrity Unit to continue to work the energy

programs. The Program Integrity workers draws a higher percentage of the money down from the State due to their salary ranges; which cause the energy money to be depleted quickly and then it will turn into all county dollars. I looked at our agencies organizational chart as well as consulted with surrounding counties to see how they are handling their Energy programs.

After much consideration, I felt it would benefit the County more effectively for the Energy Program to be housed under the Medicaid IMC Intake and Review Unit. However, knowing with the increase of applicants we had from Medicaid Expansion the numbers now support that this change can be beneficial to our agency and overall cost to the County. The salary ranges for IMC workers are not the same pay grade as Program Integrity workers. Therefore, the money will be drawn down at its proper rate.

- Another change to our agency we moved our housekeeping to Facility Services. I would like to thank Mr. Stuart Carroll and his staff for such a wonderful job they are doing.

If you have any questions, I will be happy to address them.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Dwella M. Hall, Interim Director*

**July 2024**  
**Human Services**

**Adult Services (APS)**

APS Reports Accepted: 10  
County Wards: 25  
Number of Payee Cases: 11  
Adults Served APS: 2

**Children’s Protective Services (CPS)**

Reports Accepted: 20  
Reports Screened out: 12  
Families Receiving In-Home Services: 29  
Children Served: 74  
Contacts with Families Monthly: 295  
Assessments: 17

**Foster Care**

Foster Children in Foster Homes: 70  
Children Placed Outside County: 32  
Agency Adoptions: 0  
Pending Adoptions: 8  
Total Foster Homes Licensed: 8  
Total Children in Foster Care: 78

**Work First Employment (TANF)**

Applications Taken: 30  
Applications Approved: 7  
Individuals Receiving Benefits: 158  
Entered Employments: 1  
Number in Non-Paid Work Experience: 0

Human Services (continued)

Program Integrity

Collections for Fraud: \$13,110.15  
New Referrals: 4  
Cases Established: 0

Day Care

Children Receiving Day Care Assistance: Not Available  
Children on the Waiting List: 0  
Amount Spent on Day Care Services: \$ Not Available

July 2024Economic Services

Food & Nutrition

Applications Taken: 242  
Applications Approved: 251  
Active Cases: 5,916  
Benefits Issued: \$1,920,376.00  
Participants Served: 11,705

Adult Medicaid

Applications Taken: 101  
Redeterminations: 240  
Applications Processed: 219  
Total Medicaid Cases: 15,848  
Total Individuals Receiving: 20,672

Medicaid Transportation (NEMT)

Number of Medicaid Transportation Trips: 1,379  
Amount Requested for Reimbursement: \$42,378.25

Family & Children’s Medicaid

Applications Taken: 232  
Applications Processed: 383  
Redeterminations: 440

Child Support

Absent Parents Located: 33  
Orders Enforced: 1,118  
Active Cases: 3,101  
Collections: \$426,988.00

Economic Services Narrative  
Darlene Jenkins-Parks, Income Maintenance Administrator  
Vacancies/Updates/News for July 2024

**FNS Intake/Processing:** The FNS applications continue steadily received. The staff in this unit are working together to meet timeliness and accuracy demands. They have been working together to assist the review unit key late re-certifications.

**FNS Review:** Effective July 22<sup>nd</sup>; Sheila Hendrix assumed the position of supervisor for this unit; prior to this Sheila was the unit lead worker. Currently the IMC III (lead worker) position is vacant, one IMC II vacant position (advertised).

**F&C Medicaid Intake/Processing & Energy Assistance Unit:** Effective July 1<sup>st</sup>; this unit & supervisor officially assumed the responsibility of the Energy Assistance programs in addition to F&C Medicaid. The Medicaid applications continue to be steady, but staff are able to meet the deadline requirements. Currently only designated staff work on the energy applications. Everyone in this unit will be trained and ready to assist with Energy applications.

**Energy Assistance Program:** The Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) is a Federally funded program that assist individuals and families experiencing a cooling or heating related crisis. This program begins each fiscal year July 1<sup>st</sup> until June 30<sup>th</sup> or sooner if (CIP) allocation is exhausted, whichever comes first. Applicants may apply in person, mail, e-mail, fax, drop off, or online at [www.e.pass.nc.gov](http://www.e.pass.nc.gov). Applications can be picked up in our agency lobby. Household eligibility requirements for the CIP includes US Citizen or non-citizen who meets the eligibility criteria, income test, energy related crisis, utility statement with amount owed to alleviate the crisis and a health related or life threatening emergency. Currently in person interviews are not required.

**F&C Medicaid Review Unit:** This unit has been working to develop best practice strategies to meet their timeliness and volume of caseloads. Each caseworker has about 1150-1200 cases each. They are dedicated and will strive to be successful.

**Adult Medicaid Intake/Processing Unit:** This unit will assist the F&C Medicaid staff with the Energy Assistance program applications when they begin to have an overflow of applications. On July 23<sup>rd</sup>; supervisor Tammy Vereen was appointed to the AmeriCorps Seniors RSVP Advisory Council. This organization is in need of additional volunteers that would be able to assist seniors with Financial Literacy, Telecare, Companionship Disaster Services and Nutritional Support.

**Adult Medicaid Review Unit:** The implementation of Medicaid Expansion has made a drastic change in the review units daily process. They can be working on three different months of reviews at once. In addition to completing redeterminations, they complete any changes reported by the client, known in the agency or any of the ten or more reports that must be worked weekly.

**LTC/CAP/SA:** The unit completes the intake/processing and review for the LTC (Long Term Care), CAP (Community Alternative Program) and SA (Special Assistance) in home or faculty programs.

**Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation (NEMT):** The NEMT staff are responsible to verify the client qualifies based on Medicaid eligibility in the NCFast system. Prior to scheduling transportation with agency contracted vendor, to ensure payment submission is correct and approval in NCTRACKS for vendor payment. They follow same eligibility procedures for clients that request mileage payments for NEMT, these are not billed through NCFast. They handle phone calls, new & updated assessments daily.

**Agency Interpreter:** The agency has one Spanish speaking interpreter that assists in any area needed. If she is not available or the language is other than Spanish, then all staff have access to the Propio Telephonic Interpreting Service language line. She completes energy assistance applications when not needed to interpret.

**Child Support:**

**Great Job!** The State and Federal standard for quality is **95%**. Columbus County Child Support department **performed at an average of 95.12% for SFY 2024.**

**Establishment Unit:** The establishment unit has prepared 85 cases for court action in July. The establishment unit continues to utilize telephone interview of clients/non-custodial parents as well as scheduling in office appointments. They continue to handle cases whenever possible with the non-custodial parent agreement and signing the Voluntary Agreement/Consent and any other required documents.

**Enforcement Unit:** The enforcement unit prepared 242 cases for court action in July. The enforcement unit continues to see client/non-custodial parents in the office for case consultations and to attempt to resolve as many issues outside the courtroom as possible. The majority of these cases require a hearing.

***HUMAN SERVICES BOARD REPORT***  
**Dwella M. Hall, Program Manager-Interim Director**  
**Vacancies/Updates/News for July, 2024**

**Intake/Investigation/Assessment:**

The Intake/Investigation/Assessment Unit continues to be fully staffed. This Unit continues to receive referrals involving substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health issues, among other things.



The after-hours unit continues to assist the Foster Care unit with after hours' home visits. The After Hours Worker also completes all courtesies from other counties, occasional follow up contacts for the In Home Services unit as well as completing CPS and APS intake referrals and responding accordingly. Monthly CCPT (Community Child Protection Team) meeting are held as well as attending the monthly MDT (Multi-Disciplinary Team) meeting at the local Child Advocacy Center. Our Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) conducted an in person meeting this month to review agency data, policy updates, and casework.

### **In-Home Services:**

The I H S unit currently has 29 open cases. This unit has one SW out on maternity leave for approximately 10 weeks. We are declining in the number of Foster Care cases we are housing within the I H S unit we are down to five cases. The supervisor participates in Child and Family Team Meetings each month as well as accompany staff when needed to home visits and attends Court proceedings. For the month of July, one new petition was filed by the I HS's unit as more families are being reunified. Our Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) conducted an in person meeting this month to review agency data, policy updates, and casework.

### **Foster Care/Permanency Planning:**

The Foster Care Unit is comprised of seven positions, with three of those positions currently vacant and frozen. Currently there are 78 children in our foster care program, with 32 of those children being placed outside of Columbus County. The unit continues to ensure that all of the children's needs and safety are being met, while simultaneously working with community partners, parents, caretakers, foster parents, and the judicial system to seek permanency for each child. The Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) conducted an in person consultation on 7/31/24 to review agency data, policy updates, and casework. As a result of the upcoming school year quickly approaching, it is likely that this unit will see an increase of cases in the near future.

### **Transitional Unit:**

This unit has one vacant position. This unit continues to work caseloads while assisting the other Child Welfare Units as needed, particularly in the areas of courtesy requests from other counties, assisting with supervising visits and transporting children in custody. This Unit continues to assist particularly in the area of making monthly contacts with the children in foster care and assisting in finding placement when disruption occurs. Foster Home Licensing continues to work on completing more licensures. Our Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) conducted an onsite visit this month to review agency data, policy updates, and casework.

### **Adult Services:**

The Adult Services Unit remains short one SW; however, we continue to provide all state mandated services. Adult Services continues to serve the citizens of Columbus County ages 18 and above. Due to adults living longer, our aging population has increased and so has the complexity of caring for our seniors. It is with great appreciation that we are able to assist them, in cooperation with other departments in the county and other agencies who accept our referrals.

### **Work First Employment:**

This Unit continues to be fully staffed. The unit is open for in-person applications, telephone interviews continue for Work First applications, recertification's, short-term services and benefits. Certain necessary application documentation can be mailed to individuals that wish to apply and when received back the worker can conduct telephone interviews to complete that application. Workers are able to conduct home visits to complete the interview process when necessary. Some application information is also being provided for pick-up in the foyer area of the agency. Workers are encouraged to make telephone contacts with clients at least every two weeks to offer support and resources to clients and to encourage program participation. The agency continues to have monthly meetings with the state reps by conference calls. The Regional Economic Consultant conducted an in-person meeting this month.

### **Child Day Care:**

The Child Day Care Unit continues to be fully staffed. Day Care slots within local day cares are limited at this time and many day cares are continuing to have a waiting list. The agency has eliminated the waiting list and able to continue to serve the public. Supervisor continues to ensure case transfers are received properly and sent in a timely manner. The unit is open for in-person applications and telephone interviews, and staff continue to complete Day Care applications and recertification's.

### **Program Integrity:**

- a. Medicaid Expansion – additional funds
- b. Rollover – calling up previously allocated funds

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Featherson. The motion unanimously passed.

Columbus County, North Carolina

**BUDGET AMENDMENT**

FY 24/25

Name of Department: Social Services

Agency Head Signature: *Owella M. Hall*

Date Prepare / Submitted to Admin: August 12, 2024 Date Received in Admin:

Budget Code			EXPENDITURES	Requested
Fund	Dept	Category	Classification	Increase or (Decrease)
10	9600	560062	Special Adoptions	\$207,812
10	5301	549703	Food Stamp Supplemental	\$34,962
10	5301	531300	Medicaid Expansion	\$63,963
10	5301	531304	Child Support Incentive	\$251,579
			Total Net Expense	\$557,916

Budget Code			REVENUES	Requested
Fund	Dept	Category	Classification	Increase or (Decrease)
10	3691	499101	Fund Balance Appropriated	\$557,916
			Total Net Revenue	\$557,916

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☐ This budget revision has been approved by the Columbus County Finance Office:

☐ This budget revision has been approved by the Columbus County County Manager:

☐ This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on:

Signature	Date
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**Explanation of Increase or Decrease:**

These funds have been provided to the above programs for the purpose of expanding and/or enhancing these particular programs. The unspent balances from previous years are being carried forward.

Version 1.0

Budget Amendment.xls

Created:12/15/04

**Agenda Item #23: TAX ADMINISTRATION – APPOINTMENT of RENEE LASHLEY as DEPUTY TAX COLLECTOR:** Tax Administrator Needom Hughes requested appointment of Renee Lashley as Deputy Tax Collector due to the retirement of current Deputy Tax Collector Douglas Ward. Renee Lashley’s appointment will be effective August 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

Vice Chairman Byrd made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

- a. Public Utilities - Environmental Chemists
- b. Aging – Rental Renewal Town of Chadbourn
- c. Animal Services – Vet Bill
- d. Animal Services – Hill Manufacturing – Janitorial Supplies

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Coleman. The motion unanimously passed.



Agenda Item #25: APPOINTMENTS/RE-APPOINTMENTS/REPLACEMENTS: STAFF is REQUESTING APPOINTMENTS, REAPPINTMENTS or REPLACEMENTS to the FOLLOWING BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COUNCILS.

Legend: EB =Entire Board  
Listed Zone # =Individual Commissioner

Zone I:	Barbara Featherson	Zone V:	Brent Watts
Zone II:	Chris Smith	Zone VI:	Ricky Bullard
Zone III:	Giles E. Byrd	Zone VII:	Scott Floyd
Zone IV:	Lavern Coleman		

COMMITTEE	ZONE/ EB	PERSON(S)	EXP. DATE	BOARD ACTION
Water & Sewer Advisory Commission	I	William Christopher Barnhill	6/30/2024	HOLD
Water & Sewer Advisory Commission	II	Clarence Matthew Smith	6/30/2024	RE-APPT
Water & Sewer Advisory Commission	III	Margaret Gordon	6/30/2024	HOLD
Water & Sewer Advisory Commission	IV	David Parks	6/30/2024	RE-APPT
Water & Sewer Advisory Commission	V	Steve Long	6/30/2024	RE-APPT
Water & Sewer Advisory Commission	VI	James Worley	6/30/2024	RE-APPT
Housing Advisory Committee	EB	Ricky Bullard (Comm. Appt.)	6/30/2024	1-Coleman 2-Watts RE-APPT
Housing Advisory Committee	I	Jamie Reeves	6/30/2024	HOLD
Housing Advisory Committee	II	Michael Clemmons	6/30/2024	RE-APPT
Housing Advisory Committee	III	Ernie Freeman	6/30/2024	RE-APPT
Housing Advisory Committee	IV	Vickie Pait	6/30/2024	RE-APPT
Housing Advisory Committee	VI	Bonnie K. Prince	6/30/2024	RE-APPT
Housing Advisory Committee	VII	James Register	6/30/2024	RE-APPT
Housing Advisory Committee	EB	Kayla Murphy (Social Services)	6/30/2024	RE-APPT

RECESS REGULAR SESSION and enter into COLUMBUS COUNTY WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV AND V.

MOTION:  
At 7:50 P.M. a Motion was made by Commissioner Watts and second by Commissioner Coleman to recess regular session and enter into Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V.

Agenda Item #26: APPROVAL of WATER and SEWER COMBINATION MINUTES:

- August 05, 2024 (5 sets)

MOTION:  
Commissioner Watts made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Coleman. The motion unanimously passed.

Agenda Item #27: WATER and SEWER DISTRICTS I, II, III, IV, and V - APPROVAL of the QUOTE to PURCHASE 2 VEHICLES for PUBLIC UTILITIES:

Public Utilities Director Harold Nobles requested approval of the quote to purchase 2 vehicles in the amount of \$94,398 for Public Utilities. This purchase was pre-budgeted for FY 24/25.

MOTION:  
Commissioner Coleman made a motion to approve, seconded by Vice Chairman Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.

RETAIL PURCHASE AGREEMENT

08/06/2024 (910) 641-3935  
DATE PURCHASER'S TELEPHONE  
County Of Columbus For Public Utility

127 Webster St  
FIRST NAMED PURCHASER  
Whiteville  
CITY  
Columbus  
ADDRESS  
NC  
COUNTY  
28472  
STATE ZIP CODE

PURCHASE VEHICLE  
YEAR MAKE MODEL STOCK NO.  
2024 Ram 1500 Granite Crystal M 240717  
VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER  
1C6SR8G6T6RN175412  
THE VEHICLE BEING PURCHASED IS: NEW ☒ USED ☐ PRIOR USE DISCLOSURE: ☐ PREVIOUSLY TITLED ☐ PRIOR LEASE ☐ OR RENTAL ☐ DEMONSTRATOR ☐

WARRANTY STATEMENT  
WE ARE SELLING THIS VEHICLE TO YOU AS-IS AND WE EXPRESSLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING MY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. UNLESS THE BOX BESIDE "USED VEHICLE LIMITED WARRANTY APPLIES" IS MARKED BELOW. ALL WARRANTIES, IF ANY, BY A MANUFACTURER OR SUPPLIER ARE THEIRS, NOT OURS AND ONLY SUCH MANUFACTURER OR SUPPLIER SHALL BE LIABLE FOR PERFORMANCE UNDER SUCH WARRANTIES. WE NEITHER ASSUME NOR AUTHORIZE ANY OTHER PERSON TO ASSUME FOR US ANY LIABILITY IN CONNECTION WITH THE SALE OF THE VEHICLE AND RELATED GOODS AND SERVICES. IF WE SELL A SERVICE CONTRACT ON OUR OWN BEHALF, ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES SHALL APPLY ONLY TO THE ITEMS COVERED BY THE SERVICE CONTRACT. THE CONTRACTUAL DISCLOSURE STATEMENT (USED VEHICLES) IS THE INFORMATION YOU SEE ON THE WINDOW FORM FOR THIS VEHICLE AND IS PART OF THIS CONTRACT. INFORMATION ON THE WINDOW FORM OVERRIDES ANY CONTRARY PROVISIONS IN THE CONTRACT OF SALE.  
☐ USED VEHICLE LIMITED WARRANTY APPLIES  
\* THIS DEALERSHIP IS PROVIDING A USED VEHICLE LIMITED WARRANTY IN CONNECTION WITH THIS TRANSACTION AS DISPLAYED ON THE BUYER'S GUIDE

OTHER MATERIAL UNDERSTANDINGS AND INCORPORATED DOCUMENTS  
1. I understand in accordance with North Carolina G. S. 20-101.1 and 20-101.0, relating Dealership may charge an ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES fee as displayed within this Agreement reflecting cosmetic detailing materials, administrative services, notary services, courier services fuel, cost and/or profit to the retailing Dealership for items ad as inspections, cleaning and adjusting vehicle and preparing all documents relating to this Purchase.  
2. I understand this Purchase may be depended upon the BALANCE AMOUNT OF TRADE displayed within this document and further accept my responsibility to pay the difference immediately if verified balance is higher than displayed, and said Dealership to make immediate adjustments to me if said balance is lower pursuant to the CONDITIONAL PAYOFF AGREEMENT signed by my hand and incorporates into this Agreement.  
3. In the event I elect Dealership assistance in financing this Purchase, I understand this Transaction is CONDITIONAL until a lender has purchased my CREDIT SALE INSTALLMENT CONTRACT and said lender has funded retailing Dealership for same pursuant to the CONDITIONAL DELIVERY AGREEMENT signed by my hand and incorporated into this Agreement. I further understand for assisting me to obtain financing for this transaction:  
a. the Dealership may receive a fee, commission or may apply in additional retail interest rate percentage for administrative costs and services in arranging and assisting me in financing this purchase.  
b. that dependent upon the final approval terms assigned to this Dealership by a contracted lender, the interest rate offered to me by said Dealership may be benefit without discriminatory applications including, but not limited to race, nationality, sex, age, religious beliefs, marital status, or receipt of public assistance.  
c. I understand I am under no obligation to finance this purchase with any particular lender. Lien Information:  

Lienholder:	Lien Amount \$	Date of Lien:
Address:	Total Interest \$	Amt. Percentage Rate: %
	Payments Of \$	1st Payment Due:

4. I understand that any dispute arising from, or relating to this transaction, shall be settled by neutral arbitration pursuant to the GOVERNING ARBITRATION AGREEMENT signed by my hand and incorporated into this Agreement.  
(CONTINUED ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS AGREEMENT)  
I HAVE BEEN GIVEN AMPLE OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE THIS ENTIRE RETAIL PURCHASE AGREEMENT, FRONT AND BACK, AND I HEREBY ACCEPT THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS INCLUDING THOSE LISTED ON THE REVERSE SIDE OF THIS AGREEMENT.  
PURCHASER(S) PURCHASER(S)

I HEREBY ACKNOWLEDGE THIS AGREEMENT IS COMPLETE AND ACCURATELY REFLECTS ANY AND ALL RELATED DOCUMENTS SIGNED BY MY HAND AND REFERENCED AS INCORPORATED INTO THIS AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE DEALERSHIP AND MYSELF.  
ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF A COPY OF THIS AGREEMENT WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THIS AGREEMENT IS NOT BINDING UPON THE DEALERSHIP OR PURCHASER(S) UNTIL SIGNED BY AN AUTHORIZED DEALERSHIP REPRESENTATIVE  
PURCHASER(S) DATE 08/06/2024  
PURCHASER(S) DATE 08/06/2024

950 Highway 66 South  
Kernersville, NC 27284  
336.996.4111

CHRYSLER  
DODGE

INFORMATION REQUIRED TO VERIFY IDENTITY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE UNITED STATES PATRIOT AND FACT ACTS:  
16 PURCHASER(S) SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER  
34 PURCHASER(S) SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER

TRADE-IN VEHICLE #1 INFORMATION  
YEAR MAKE MODEL  
ODOMETER READING COLOR  
VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER  
LIEN BALANCE OWED TO

TRADE-IN VEHICLE #2 INFORMATION  
YEAR MAKE MODEL  
ODOMETER READING COLOR  
VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER  
LIEN BALANCE OWED TO

CASH PRICE OF VEHICLE 52943.00  
OTHER GOODS/SERVICES  
bedliner 500.00  
remote start 590.00  
NC HIGHWAY USE TAX 3% 1647.98  
NC TITLE AND REGISTRATION FEES 67.75  
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES 899.50  
TOTAL SELLING PRICE  
LESS: TRADE-IN PRICE (-)  
SUBTOTAL  
PLUS: BALANCE AMOUNT OF TRADE (+)  
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE  
LESS: CAN ON DELIVERY (-)  
LESS: CASH (REBATE) (-) 7500.00  
UNPAID BALANCE DUE 49148.23  
The sum of \$ was received from you as a Deposit/Partial Payment and is fully refundable except as set forth in this Agreement.  
KERNERSVILLE  
ACCEPTED BY AUTHORIZED DEALERSHIP REPRESENTATIVE

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ODOMETER READING COLOR  
VEHICLE IDENTIFICATION NUMBER  
LIEN BALANCE OWED TO

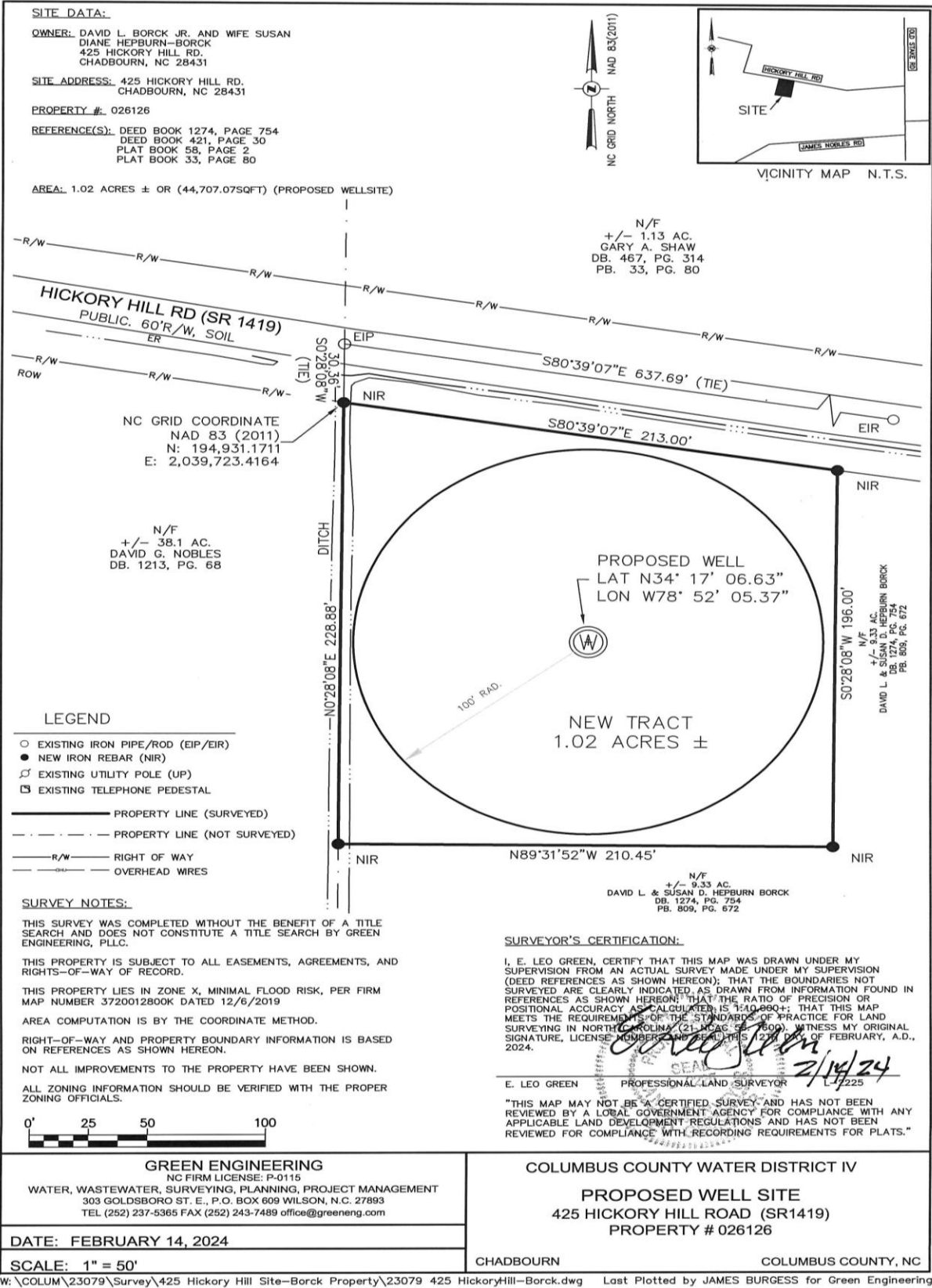
CASH PRICE OF VEHICLE 49158.00  
OTHER GOODS/SERVICES  
remotestart 590.00  
bedliner 500.00  
NC HIGHWAY USE TAX 3% 1534.43  
NC TITLE AND REGISTRATION FEES 67.75  
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES 899.50  
TOTAL SELLING PRICE  
LESS: TRADE-IN PRICE (-)  
SUBTOTAL  
PLUS: BALANCE AMOUNT OF TRADE (+)  
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE  
LESS: CAN ON DELIVERY (-)  
LESS: CASH (REBATE) (-)  
UNPAID BALANCE DUE 45249.68  
The sum of \$ was received from you as a Deposit/Partial Payment and is fully refundable except as set forth in this Agreement.  
KERNERSVILLE  
ACCEPTED BY AUTHORIZED DEALERSHIP REPRESENTATIVE

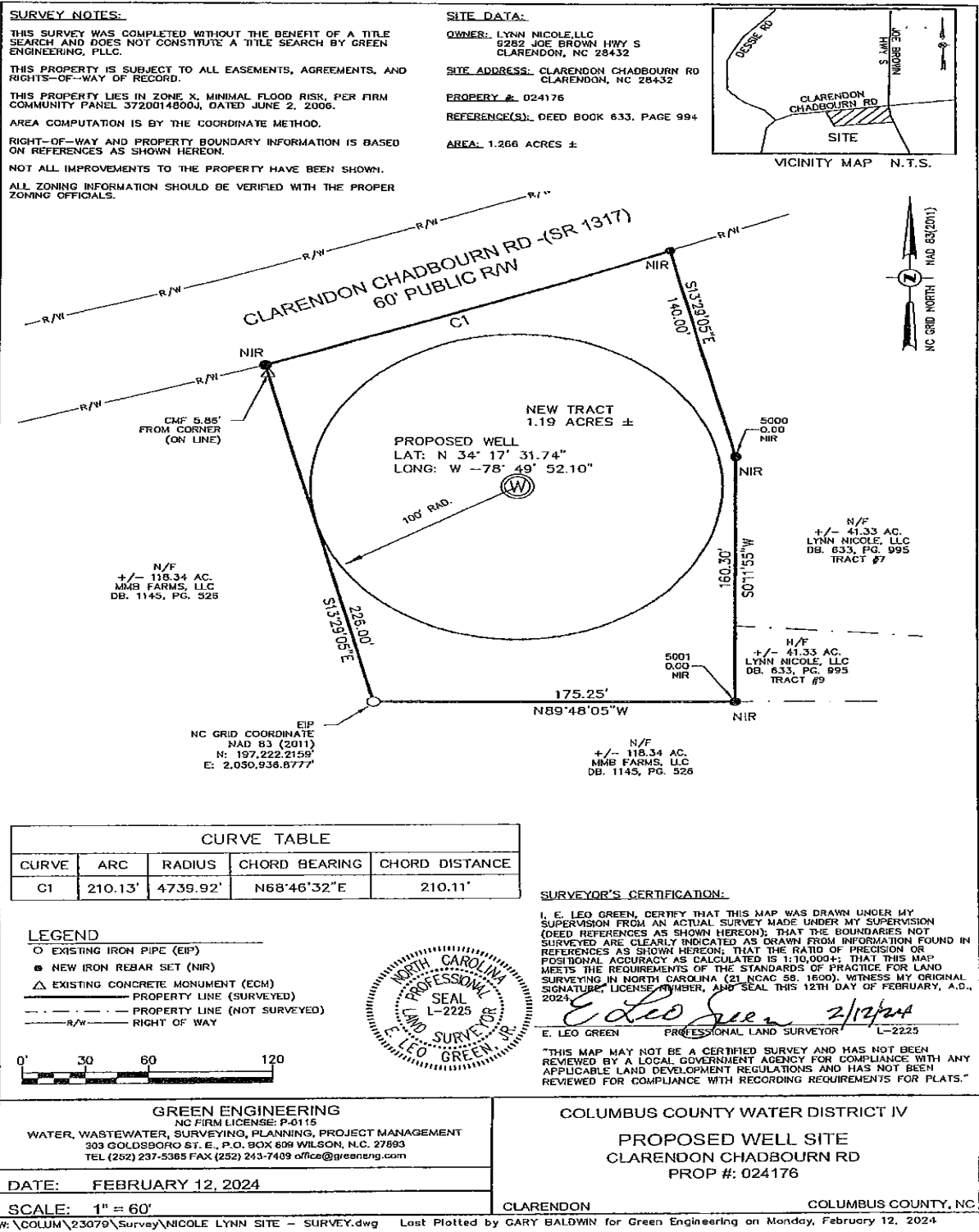


**Agenda Item #28: WATER and SEWER DISTRICT II, III, AND V- APPROVAL to PURCHASE PROPERTY with STATE FUNDS on HICKORY HILL RD and CLARENDON/CHADBOURN CHURCH RD for WELL SITES and ASSOCIATED PURCHASE AGREEMENTS:** Public Utilities Director Harold Nobles requested approval to purchase property, with state funds, on Hickory Hill Rd and Clarendon/Chadbourn Church Rd for well sites and associated purchase agreements. These properties are to support infrastructure for Dothan Project.

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve, seconded by Vice Chairman Byrd. The motion unanimously passed.



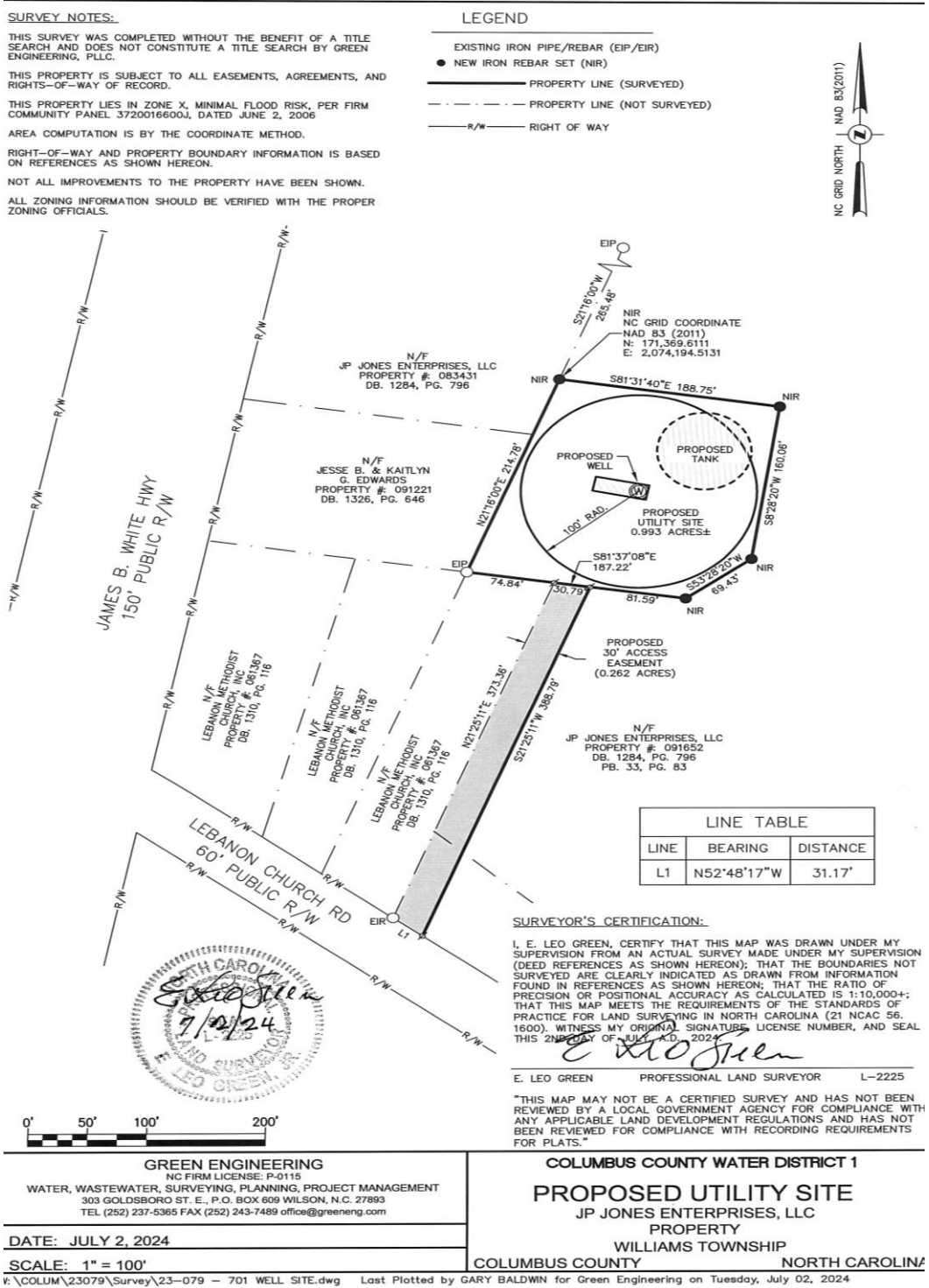


**Agenda Item #29: WATER and SEWER DISTRICT II, III, and V – APPROVAL to PURCHASE PROPERTY with STATE FUNDS on LEBANON CHURCH RD (DOTHAN) for TANK, BOOSTER PUMP STATION, and POSSIBLE WELL SITE and APPROVAL of the ASSOCIATED PURCHASE AGREEMENT:**

Public Utilities Director Harold Nobles requested approval to purchase property with state funds on Lebanon Church Rd (Dothan) for a tank, booster pump station, possible well site and the associated purchase agreement.

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Featherson made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watts. The motion unanimously passed.



**Agenda Item #30: WATER and SEWER DISTRICT II – APPROVAL of the BOARDMAN METER WATER CONNECTION:**

Public Utilities Director Harold Nobles requested approval of the Boardman meter water connection contingent upon property purchase by the Town of Boardman.

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Featherson made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Watts. The motion unanimously passed.

Columbus County Board of Commissioners  
 127 W. Webster Street  
 Whiteville, NC 28472

RE: Town of Boardman  
 Metered Water Interconnection

Columbus County Board of Commissioners,

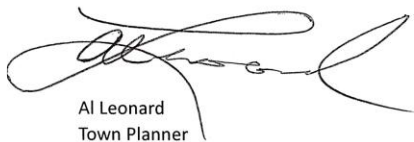
The Town of Boardman would like to propose the construction of a new master metered water interconnection with Columbus County. The County is currently providing Boardman with water. The usage is determined by the sum of Boardman's individual water customers consumption--- and not through a master meter.

With urging from the County Utility Department, the Town has recently received funding through the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality to construct a metered interconnection including a new meter vault and RPZ. The Town contacted several property owners before finding one willing to sell the Town the property for the new meter site. The proposed site is located at 3001 Old Boardman Road on Property #022439. The Town is working on getting an appraisal in order to purchase this land for the new metered interconnection.

Before acquiring this land, the Town wanted to formally submit this to the Board in order to get their approval on the proposed site. If the Board does approve the proposed site for the new metered water interconnection, the Town will submit engineering plans and specifications to the County for their approval prior to beginning any construction on this project. A map has been attached showing the proposed property and location of the proposed metered water interconnection.

We would like to ask the Board to vote on the approval of the proposed site and project.

Thank you,



Al Leonard  
 Town Planner  
 Town of Boardman

**ADJOURN COMBINATION MEETING OF Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV AND V BOARD MEETING.**

**MOTION:**

Vice Chairman Coleman made a motion to approve, seconded by Commissioner Featherson. The motion unanimously passed.

**Agenda Item #31: COMMENTS:**

**A. Board of Commissioners**

**Commissioner Featherson commented:**

- I don't have very much to say tonight except again very grateful County employees and volunteers that that work so diligently during the storm keeping us all safe, thanks.

**Commissioner Floyd commented:**

- I piggy-back on everything she just said

**Commissioner Smith commented:**

- I forgot who whose page it was but they mentioned a sign at the Courthouse but, I rode by there and saw it, they said please turn the “N” up the right way in “Columbus County” at the courthouse.  
*County Manager Eddie Madden responded by saying he is planning to speak on that in just a moment.*

**Vice Chairman Byrd commented:**

- “I've got two households that the I like a letter written to the state for the flooding that I'll we talking about drainage and on back on Loop Road. I understand you have done a little research I went down one afternoon right after we had a 3-in heavy rain and just in that vicinity. I think there's at least two County employees that we have live on that road and there's some water that's

coming all the way off of 74/76 and little old hand ditches that's coming right through on that Loop Road. I've got all kind of pictures that I took that day and you know we've had a problem with the Right-of-Way. I think Miss Amanda says she has found three, that's real old that was in some flat books. We have three, but regardless, if we can't get the road to widen it undoubtedly the state does have a Right-of-Way that they've been taking care of all these years and the state needs to go in there and at least do adequate draining. A big old ditch that runs between, in the loop I mean, there's a canal there and if it was just worked, it would handle a lot of that water and keep it from going in those folks' houses. I went out there on the four-lane and there was a lot of water going back the other direction and then up on this end in the curve where highway 214 comes back in. Also, for a good section there was no water in the four-lane road's ditch, but I noticed those little other ditches, where the water had round that way. I mentioned that Miss Hayes tonight on the money she's getting, and that Branch comes in there behind Rest Well Cemetery and we do have a beaver problem in there but I just feel like that, if we can't get the right-of-way to widen the road and pave it, then the state should utilize the right of way that they've had and maintained for years to help get that road more stable and get some drainage on it. I mean, those folks are really going through a whole lot when they have a you know a lot of rainstorms, but I went with the 3-in rain that afternoon and then I made several trips during Debbie to see what was going and where the water was running and on Blacksmith Road there's several tiles of driveways it was just like doorsteps as you travel by because so many bottles, Styrofoam cups, Styrofoam plates, and anything that would wash into the ditch runs to a point and then when it's got to go in a culvert, it'll just sit there and spin. As the water drops down, all that stuff will sit right down there and block the tile so if the state would just go and clean out in front of the tiles of the driveways, it would help a tremendous amount to get the water off of Blacksmith Road because it's coming down blacksmith and turning and going up the Loop Road. I have a lot of pictures pertaining to it, but anyhow, I wish you would take that up and address it with Mr Clark and see what we can get. I've know that there's been one signature that's been extremely hard to get and the family actually owns land on both ends of it but the guy holding it up he just married into the family you know I mean and he's 89 years old I think and his wife passed away a couple years ago but he's the main problem holding that up.

- Another thing I've talked with several different officers over the weekend and all and you know they're just so disappointed when they put months and hours after hours in working a case and then they do a drug bust or whatever and find a whole lot of stuff their bonds are so low before they can ever get together doing their paperwork the defendant they brought in is already gone and I think this board ought to maybe write a letter to Miss Ashley Gore and ask her to review that because it's up to her I think the superior court judge has the authority to kind of set a basic bond level, but I mean, I don't want to get in specifics, because someone might know exactly the case I'm talking about but I'd be glad to speak with anyone um individually on it but it was a tremendous bust and the person got just a low Bond and you know that's disappointing when an officer risk his life stay up half of the night do everything it takes to build a case and then when you get them the bond is not anything. They go to court, they don't do anything, so that's the reason you're having such a hard time keeping good certified police officers. I mean that's a problem. I wouldn't want to do it and you catch him they're not going to do anything with them, so I think we need to address a letter Mr. Chairman and ask her to relook at that maybe could increase it so I also had that discussion with someone from the Sheriff's Department officers, also, so I think it is a very major concern to look into.

*County Manager Eddie Madden responded by saying we'll be happy to draft something for you*

**Commissioner Coleman commented:**

- I just again want to echo everything that's been said, everybody was safe and far as having a good storm we had a good storm as far as damages and Whiteville got a lot of water I appreciate again all the volunteers that we had during the storm.
- Mr. Madden, to piggy back on what Mr. Byrd was talking about. The roads, the ditches are so shallow there's several ditches in my area that's level with the road and the roads are washing away on Spearman Road. They told me they put \$500,000 worth of rock on it, about six months ago and it needs another \$500,000 on it now and it's all in the ditches the water has got nowhere to go and we Mr. Clark about getting the ditches cleaned out and then in the Buckhead Community. also uh

Mrs. Patrick, Nadine Patrick, she talked to me about it and she wanted me to bring it up to try to get these ditches opened up. A shallow ditch, you can argue all you want to, but a shallow ditch just ain't going to take enough water away.

*Vice Chairman Byrd responded: We need to look at getting these ditches opened up to. The tile on Blacksmith road, that I have mentioned before, that if they would put another culvert in there, the road water could get under the road rather than run down and back up in people's yard. And then it comes across the highway, that was a problem there this time, the water on one side was a foot higher than it was on the other side, and it couldn't get the road as high so the water banks up on the road and backs down 150 yards probably, and then, crosses into a low ditch and runs right back in the road ditch beside the road on the other side to get into the canal when there's two culverts there, but they need three. There used to be a bridge, and they took the bridge out and put in the square cobs but it's not enough to handle that water.*

**Commissioner Watts commented:**

- On the south end everyone is fussing where they mow the side of the road, and I know it's been wet, but on Dothan Road, the other day, I mean I had pictures, and the grass was very deep down the whole road, and somebody's going to get hurt. Also, people are complaining, and people on Facebook, they say "the county" well I've explained that it's not the county it's the state the county has nothing to do bushhogging the sides of the road. I think we do need to say something you know maybe you don't need to let it get that high because some it will cause a wreck especially as wet as it is.
- The next thing on my list is that we need to remember school starts next Monday. Everyone needs to remember the kids and the safety of the kids and let's pray for them that they have a great school year and everyone does well.

*Commissioner Featherson responded: We need to pray for our farmers.*

**Chairman Bullard commented:**

- I just like to say I appreciate everyone that helped out during the storm. Thank you very much.
- I was in Fair Bluff the other day with Mr. Madden and Nick West and there was an emergency a lady called about her nephew and he was already dead but she didn't know it because she thought he was sleeping and it was a sad situation, but what impressed me, it made me proud, because as we drove up, and I was in the vehicle, Mr Nick he jumps out and he helps drag that guy out of the car immediately starts giving him CPR. His training kicked in and I was thinking, you know this guy knows what he's talking about, if you're at the podium he's always talking about things he can do to help our County better, this time he showed it. I saw him trying to help save a life and so, thank you Mr. Nick. I was glad to say that you were part of Columbus County's EMS team and David was there and these guys had the backpack in the back of the truck and they put her skills to work immediately. Fair Bluff came and some Sheriff deputies that were there also, and these guys were taking Turns including the Highway Patrol, they were there they all jumped in like a family and they were taking turns administering CPR and uh it was very impressive at the same time very sad but I was glad that help was there and he it wasn't having to wait on help. I got a big shout out to all you guys.
- The Fair Bluff Mayor told me to tell our County Manager he appreciates everything he does for Mr. Billy Hammond he's very proud of the support that our County Manager gives to him when he calls and needs it. He said he's never had it before and he thanks the Board of Commissioners for what they do and the County Manager.
- Tomorrow afternoon, at six o'clock, at West Columbus High School, in Cerro Gordo, they are inviting all the citizens and churches that will, gather at the school at six o'clock to have prayer. They want to have a little prayer for that school to start at 6 o' when they finish at that school they going to move on to West Columbus High School and pray for our students. So, I'm going to challenge all the Commissioners if you'll join me there tomorrow night if it's possible. If you can't I understand it and I'm going to challenge each one of you guys to come join us.



## B. County Manager

### County Manager Eddie Madden commented:

- I apologize in advance for the length of this report but I do have uh several uh comments to make regarding this the audit that was presented this evening, this is the FY 23 audit, this is the second audit that the board has been presented with this calendar year the first being the FY 21/22 audit that was received and presented in May and then a quick turnaround of the FY 22/23 audit this evening six weeks you heard your auditor say that they turned that audit around in six weeks a tremendous undertaking by everyone involved uh that goes to credit our finance team our department managers and the audit firm of Malden and Jenkins tonight's audit brings the county into compliance with the local government commission. The next audit which would be the FY24 audit we be due October 31<sup>st</sup>, so we're in compliance with the schedule of the local government commission the audit shows an improvement in process. I know she had a number of material weaknesses, but if you compare it to the prior year, there were a number of improvements that were made over that period. That goes to the credit of the finance team, the training from the audit firm, and the department managers that have worked so closely with them. It took a considerable amount of time and effort to get to this point, but our efforts were worthwhile, the auditor has also documented a solid financial position of the county as specifically noted to the fund balance percentage. You heard a reference to a fund balance percentage of 25% compared to comparable counties to Columbus County of 20%. I would add that both audits, the one presented in May, and the one presented tonight were during a period of transition. During those periods we work with three separate Finance Directors; Mr. Jay Leatherman, who was here on an interim basis, Miss Melanie Hester who helped us for a period of time, and then finally Mrs. Lacy Jacobs. Tonight's audit was for the period that Melanie Hester and Mrs. Jacobs served as Finance Director. Mrs. Hester served for the first half of the year and then Mrs. Jacobs completed the fiscal year out. As it pertains to the audit presentation this evening, you heard that the net position of the county improved over that period while at the same time this board made significant investments in facilities, public safety, education, and infrastructure. Everyone, this board, and our staff, the audit firm should be commended for their hard work and dedication to Columbus County. In spite of what has been said privately and publicly, Columbus County is sound financially we are in compliance with the Local Government Commission. We are current on our Audits and we are managing the assets of the citizens efficiently and effectively. Since becoming your manager three and a half years ago, I have anxiously awaited for tonight's presentation and I'm pleased that the auditor has highlighted some of the successes and the progress that has been made to get us to this point. You heard the auditor refer to the July 31 submission that was a very important date for us because two things would have been triggered had that audit not been submitted by July 31<sup>st</sup>; number one, we were to appear and did appear before the Local Government Commission on August 6th and we're subject to potentially the withholding of sales tax for failure to submit the audit on time, but due to the efforts of everyone that I've mentioned so far, the audit did go in on July 31st and the LGC removed us from that list so when they made uh they took action against the 135 jurisdictions that were laid on their audit Columbus County was specifically referenced as being removed from that list. I'm pleased about that; I'm pleased about the second one which was also significant our bond rating. Something that I think everyone, especially lenders, put stock in right, when you have a good Bond rating, the lenders, USDA, and others have confidence in your ability. The lenders see you as credit worthy and they lend you money based on that. We were given a deadline of July 31st to have that audit submitted or we would lose our bond rating and I'm happy to report that because the audit was submitted on July 31st we avoided that all together so we are current with the bonding agencies. Our next audit is due October 31<sup>st</sup>, and I think you all were heard this evening and probably talked with the auditor at some length, that's a big task to complete the audit by that date, in fact, I believe what she told me today was that very few counties actually submit their audit by October 31<sup>st</sup>. That's a deadline that LGC submits. They do give you a 30-day grace period we're hopeful that we will have that in on time at least within that grace period of time frame but it is a daunting task to complete an audit like this where you have roughly a hundred million budget and to go through the entire audit process where your auditor has to split their time with other counties that they're working for. Unlike this the past six weeks, where they devoted all their time to us, to be able to complete it by that time period but we're committed to doing our very best to make sure that happens. With the vacancy in the Finance Director's position, we may have to do some contracting with outside agencies, third parties, to help us review the financial statements and maybe complete some of the checklist that is required to thoroughly perform the audit. A lot of progress has been made and the point needs to be made very clearly that the county is in a good financial position and we're anxiously awaiting the conclusion of the upcoming 24 audit.
- The next thing, the county has agreed to host the Inter- governmental meeting that will be held here on the fourth floor on September 9<sup>th</sup>, so please mark your calendars for that.

- I know you all received an invitation to attend breakfast in the morning at Whiteville High School, if you can, I know Dr. Williams would appreciate you attending that.
- Commissioner Smith, you brought up the uh the lettering on the courthouse, so Justin Smith contacted me about this some months ago bringing to my attention the issue with the N being inverted or upside down however you want to refer to it. I believe through his research and others we determined that letter had been in the wrong upright position for many, many years, dating back maybe to the mid 1950s or so. Confirming it was not something our contractor did right, and so, when I was approached about this, I had to make a decision, an executive decision, and I aired on the side of leaving it alone. It is kind of an interesting little Nuance now a part of our history. I could have had them to turn it up right, I suppose I chose not to, I'll defer to the board as to whether you would like that corrected I thought it was something kind of interesting and so we did not alter it at the time. I'll defer to you all that and Ricky you know we talked about that years ago several years ago I know I was told this morning that it's all over Facebook I don't do Facebook but that's the backstory okay and I believe Justin didn't you write an article on that or did you not I waited until a decision was made okay so no we haven't I haven't run a story and know we talked about after tonight okay well and you know the the comment said I that was shared with me was that it's kind of like a little bit of History leave it there, if you were to break it then you may not match it, it's been like that all these years. I'll do whatever the board chooses to do.
- Rene is still here, congratulations, she will do an outstanding job. Renee represents a segment of our employee base, I think that I'm most proud of, and that is the promotion of women to positions of leadership. If you look at our track record over the past three and a half years, I think you will see a significant improvement in the numbers of women who've been promoted to positions. If you look around the room here to my left and to my right you see a number of women who hold department-level positions and I'm very proud of that.

**Agenda Item #32:    ADJOURNMENT:**

**MOTION:**

At 8:10 P.M., Commissioner Smith made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Floyd The motion unanimously passed.

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JANA NEALEY, Clerk to the Board

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RICKY BULLARD, Chairman