

**COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS****Monday, November 20, 2023****5:45 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**  
 Lavern Coleman, **Vice Chairman**  
 Giles E. Byrd  
 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**

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

At 5:45 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, and N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A) (6) PERSONNEL**

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Floyd 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 and N.C.G.S. § 143-318.11(A) (6) PERSONNEL**

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

**MOTION:**

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

**GENERAL ACCOUNT:**

Attorney Amanda Prince gave the general account as follows:

The board discussed (1) matter of Attorney-Client Privilege, and (1) matter regarding Personnel, no action taken by the board.

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Smith made a motion to approve the General Account, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. 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 Scott Floyd.

**Agenda Item# 5: APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**MOTION:**

Vice Chairman Coleman made a motion to approve the Agenda with discussed Add-ons to Agenda Item #16, seconded by Commissioner Floyd. The motion unanimously passed.

**Agenda Item #6: PUBLIC INPUT:**

**Agenda Item #7: APPROVAL of BOARD MINUTES:**

**a. November 6, 2023**

**MOTION:**

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

**Agenda Item #8: PROCLAMTION – NOTARY PUBLIC DAY:**

The Governing Body requested adoption of the proclamation recognizing notary public day as a requirement for the Woodrow Franklin “Jack” Penny scholarship program for Columbus County students.

**MOTION:**

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

**Notary Public Day**  
**Recognizing Woodrow Franklin “Jack” Penny 10/23/1939 – 05/29/2021**

WHEREAS, Columbus County Notaries Public proudly serve as the front line of defense against document fraud and attempts at forgery; and

WHEREAS, Columbus County Notaries Public serve the public as impartial witnesses to the execution of important documents while verifying identities; and

WHEREAS, the role of teaching this ancient practice for Columbus County was Woodrow Franklin "Jack" Penny for over 30 years; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Penny served and taught the people of Columbus County as Notaries Public and treated such as an honor and lead others to take the oath of office to serve the people of our county with pride; and

WHEREAS, he taught with passion until he retired and his legacy serves as a representative of why we recognize Notary Public Day; and

NOW, THEREFORE, the Columbus County Commissioners, do hereby proclaim November 7, 2023, was "NOTARY PUBLIC DAY" and commend its observance to all citizens.

ADOPTED unanimously on this the 20<sup>th</sup> day of November 2023.

*Columbus County Commissioners*

**Agenda Item #9: PROCLAMTION – AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH:**

The Governing Body requested adoption of the proclamation recognizing American Indian Heritage Month.

**MOTION:**

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

**American Indian Heritage Month**

WHEREAS, American Indian Heritage Month honors and celebrates the important history and heritage of tribal communities across the state, who have lived in the geographic area of North Carolina for more than 12,000 years; and

WHEREAS, this year's theme, "Many Tribes-One People" underscores the unity and strength, as well as the rich history and culture, of North Carolina's tribal communities; and

WHEREAS, Columbus County is home to state recognized tribes and there are more than 130,000 North Carolinians who identify as American Indian in North Carolina, living in all 100 counties across the state, according to the 2020 U.S. Census; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina's tribal communities represent the second-largest American Indian population east of the Mississippi River and the seventh-largest American Indian population in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Commission of Indian Affairs, the North Carolina American Indian Heritage Commission, the North Carolina Museum of History, and North Carolina's Indian Tribes and Urban Indian Organizations collaborate to develop American Indian Heritage Month celebrations each year, increasing awareness of American Indian history and related current issues; and

ADOPTED unanimously on this the 20<sup>th</sup> day of November 2023.

### *Columbus County Commissioners*

**Agenda Item #10: ADMINISTRATION – RETIREMENT PLAQUES:**

County Manager Eddie Madden recognized the following:

- a. Retiree - Kimberly Williams for over 20 years of service with the Department of Social Services.
- b. Retiree – Susan Lennon for over 20 years of service with the Sheriff's Office.

**Agenda Item #11: SOUTHEASTERN COMMUNITY COLLEGE – APPROVAL to TRANSFER CAPITAL RESERVE FUNDS for ROADWAY REPAIRS and APPROVAL of EQUIPMENT REIMBURSEMENT:**

SCC President Dr. Chris English requested approval to transfer Capital Reserve Funds in the amount of \$49,770 to cover the expense of fixing the roadway to the North Campus. Dr. English is also requesting equipment reimbursement funds in the amount of \$22,590 for the Automotive Program

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Smith made a motion to **TABLE**, seconded by Vice Chairman Coleman. The motion unanimously passed.



November 9, 2023

County of Columbus  
Attn: County Manager  
127 W. Webster Street  
Whiteville, NC 28472

Dear Eddie Madden,

Southeastern Community College (SCC) experienced heavy rainfall during Hurricane Idalia. The aftermath of the hurricane posed an immediate safety concern for the College, as the roadway to the North side of campus was wholly washed away.

The severity of this damage necessitated swift action, so the College quickly contracted with a construction firm to restore road access and ensure safety measures on campus.

We seek approval to transfer \$49,770 from SCC's Fund Balance appropriated for Capital (held with the County) to cover this expense. We will submit a reimbursement request to the County's Finance Office upon approval.

As always, Southeastern CC is extremely grateful for the County's continued support of the college.

Sincerely,

Chris English, President

Ibreta Jackson, Chief Operating Officer



November 9, 2023

County of Columbus  
Attn: Commissioner Chairman  
127 W. Webster Street  
Whiteville, NC 28472

Dear Chairman Bullard,

Southeastern Community College (SCC) would like to thank the Columbus County Board of Commissioners for allowing us to utilize the space at 701N to develop our Automotive Technology Program in fiscal year 2023. Without this support, the College would have been unable to implement this program in a timely manner, and we are humbled by your generosity.

This Fall semester, SCC completed the construction of a new metal flex lab space. This flex lab allowed the relocation of the automotive program to our main campus, as required by our Accrediting Board. We understand the County intends to utilize the 701N location for an in-house maintenance shop. SCC made several upgrades and renovations to the site while in occupancy. The college made roof repairs, pressure washed the garage, installed new lighting, installed new paneling in deteriorated areas, and painted the facility. As we vacate, we are pleased to say the space is fully viable for immediate use by the County.

The College has removed all equipment from the 701N space except (2) 10K Challenger Vehicle Lifts valued at \$7,045 each and (1) 7.5 HP Belaire Air Compressor valued at \$8,500. At the County's request and to assist with implementing the in-house maintenance shop, SCC will leave the two lifts and air compressor affixed at the location. The College asks the County to appropriate funding to replace these items once our new Automotive STEM Building is erected. This construction is anticipated to be complete in fiscal year 2025.

Once again, we are incredibly grateful for your hospitality and for your continued support of the faculty, staff, and students at Southeastern Community College.

Sincerely,

Chris English, President

Ibreta Jackson, Chief Operating Officer

4564 Chadbourne Hwy • PO Box 151 • Whiteville, NC 28472  
sccnc.edu

## **Agenda Item #12: ADMINISTRATION – APPROVAL of the RESOLUTION of SUPPORT for MYFUTURENC:**

County Manager Eddie Madden requested approval of the resolution supporting myFutureNC, a non-profit organization assisting with the goal of 2 million North Carolina students earning high-quality credential or postsecondary degrees by 2030.

### **MOTION:**

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

## **Resolution to Support the myFutureNC Attainment Goal**

**WHEREAS**, myFutureNC is a statewide non-profit organization focused on educational attainment and is the result of cross-sector collaboration between North Carolina leaders in education, business and government; and

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina has the goal that that 2 million North Carolinians will have a high quality credential or postsecondary degree by 2030; and

**WHEREAS,** The County of Columbus is committed to fostering an environment that will allow citizens to thrive and grow by providing strong, compassionate leadership and responsible stewardship over resources to ensure improvement health and child care, education, and economic development; and

**WHEREAS,** The County of Columbus, along with other key partners, will help advance the educational attainment of students in North Carolina by readily aiding innovative efforts to provide education needed for workforce development and remaining vigilant in providing the environment for educators and students to succeed in earning high-quality credentials or postsecondary degrees; and

**WHEREAS,** The County of Columbus agrees that North Carolina faces a gap

between the projected needs for citizens with high-quality credentials or postsecondary degrees and the attainment of those high-quality credentials or postsecondary degrees.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

The County of Columbus supports the attainment goal of myFutureNC that 2 million North Carolinians should have a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree by 2030; and

The County of Columbus along with leaders in business, education, state and local government, and community organizations will continue to foster collaboration to achieve the goal by developing an action plan, defining success with measurable outcomes, executing on the action plan, and sharing successful practices with MyFutureNC and peer communities.

Adopted this the 20th day of November 2023 by The County of Columbus.

Attested By:

Jana Nealey, Clerk to the Board

Ricky Bullard, Chairman

**Agenda Item #13: SHERIFF'S OFFICE – UPDATE on DETENTION CENTER:**

Sheriff Bill Rogers and Jerome McMillian gave the board an update on Detention Center.

**Deputy Chief Jerome McMillian Commented:** I would like to give you an update on the detention center. About 2 months ago, the County Manager and his staff, along with some of the commissioners came and did a tour of the Detention Center and we explained some of the issues we have been having for years. I appreciate the it me and effort that they spent and they came and listened to us. I am hoping these changes will make it more safe for our officers and inmates.

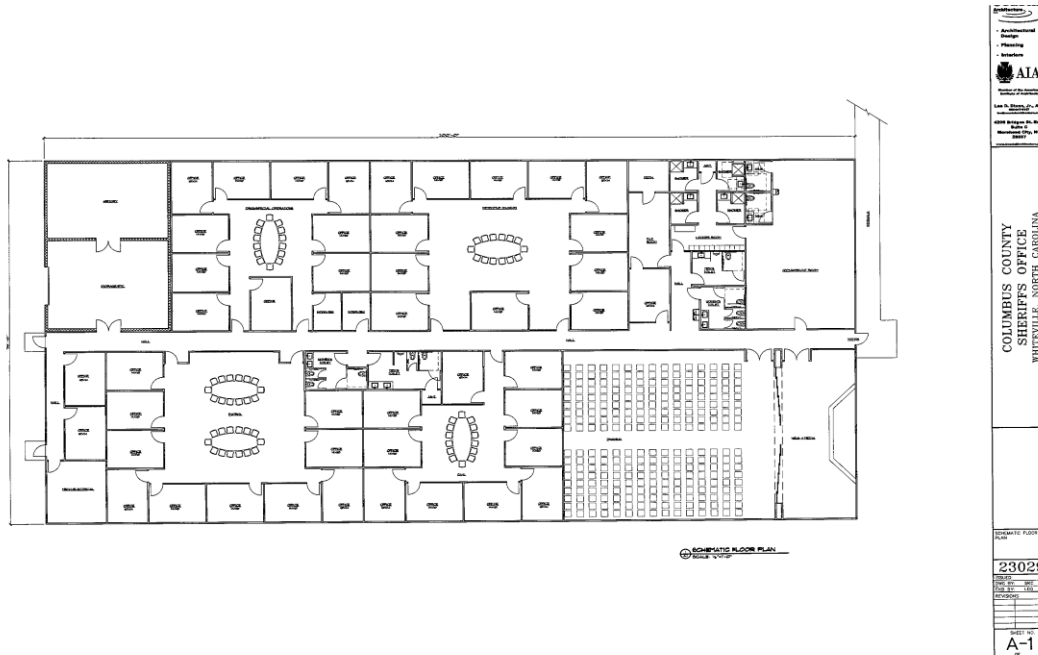
- We explained about the jail locks, the door locks have been popping open and we are having those fixed and we have the equipment in already I think it will be around the 1<sup>st</sup> when they get started. That project is a total of \$271,536 which was no cost to the county all of this is done through

Representative Jones with grant money he got for the county this is part of what it will be used for, none of this will cost the county or the taxpayers any money.

- We also requested a body scanner, we have been having some issues with drugs and things getting in the facility so this will help us with body searches. We have also had issues with hiring, so this will show if they are trying to hid different types of drugs and contraband. Again, this will cost about \$178,000 which will be paid by the state and will cost the county “not one red cent”
- The camera system has been outdated for years and we are in the process of getting that revamped with a total cost of \$371,000 and again, all of that will be paid by the state and will not cost the county “not one red cent”.
- Detention Staffing, seems like no one wants to be the “police” anymore, once they see what the job is, they decide that is not what they want to do. It has been an ongoing issue. We appreciate the commissioners for working with us when we need it.

**Sheriff Bill Rogers Commented:** With the same grant this is the idea or blueprint I got from Mr. Lee Dixon for the new Sheriff’s Office Building it is just an idea of what I wanted. We are going to leave the board of education as our main building and the Head Command staff with be on a part of the building that comes out of it. This building will house every section with the Sheriff’s Department. There will be a large meeting room with an expandable curtain so we can all meet together and an area for the media. There is also an area for the Armory, the armory is at the old jail, with this expansion we will be able to have the armory right there and double locked. 96 wide 200 foot long. Again, this will come out of the same grant and won’t cost the county anything.

- Chairman Bullard asked if this building will be attached to the other building?
  - Sheriff Rogers responded yes, attached by a breezeway



**Agenda Item #14: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – APPROVAL to RESCHEDULE the PUBLIC HEARING regarding ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE GRANT for PROJECT ACCESS:**

Economic Director Gary Lanier requested approval to reschedule the public hearing regarding an Economic Development Incentive Grant for Project Access to January 2nd, 2024 at 6:30 P.M. or as soon as can be heard.

**MOTION:**

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

**Agenda Item #15: ATTORNEY'S OFFICE – APPROVAL of the RESOLUTION regarding the UPSET BID for CERRO GORDO PROPERTY:**

Attorney Amanda Prince requested approval of the resolution regarding the upset bid for the Cerro Gordo property.

*\*After discussion the Commissioners decided that the Cerro Gordo Property would not be sold by Upset bid but they would give the town of Cerro Gordo the deed back to them to do with the property as they wish.*

*\*Commissioner Byrd commented about the property and wanted to ensure that the disposition of it was clearly noted to make sure business is being conducted properly and legally. He also wanted to note that the reason that property continued to flood was due to a tree in the culvert on the property.*

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Floyd made a motion to **transfer the deed back to the town of Cerro Gordo**, seconded by Commissioner Smith. The motion unanimously passed.

**Agenda Item #16: FINANCE – APPROVAL of BUDGET AMENDMENTS and CHANGE ORDER #1:**

Finance Director Lacie Jacobs requested approval of the following Budget Amendments and Change Order:



1. SCC – Fund Balance Capital Outlay – Hurricane Idalia
2. SCC – Central Garage Equipment
3. Airport – Terminal Building
4. Sheriff's Office – Asbestos Abatement Change Order #1

**MOTION:**

Commissioner Floyd made a motion to table budget amendments #1 and #2 and approve #3 and #4, seconded by Commissioner Featherson. The motion unanimously passed.

***\*Below are the budget amendments that were tabled.***

[illegible]

<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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> This budget revision has been approved by the Board of Columbus County Commissioners on:	
Signature	Date

**Explanation of Increase or Decrease:**

To move funding from Article 44 SCC Capital Outlay Fund to cover road repairs due to Hurricane Idalia.

BUDGET AMENDMENT						FY 23/24
Name of Department: FINANCE						
Agency Head Signature:						
Date Prepared / Submitted to Admin:	November 16, 2023				Date Received by Admin:	
Budget Code	EXPENDITURES				Requested	
Fund Dept. Category	Classification				Increase or Decrease	
10	4250	550000	CAPITAL OUTLAY		\$22,590	
				Total Net Expense	\$22,590	
Budget Code	REVENUES				Requested	
Fund Dept. Category	Classification				Increase or Decrease	
10	3991	499101	FUND BALANCE APPROPRIATED		\$22,590	
				Total Net Revenue	\$22,590	

☐ 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**

To move funds to purchase from Southeastern Community College garage maintenance items to be left in unit C at the 701 North Campuss. The items are two 10K Challenger Vehicle Lifts and a 7.5 HP Belaire Air Compressor.

***\*Below are the approved Project Ordinance budget amendment for Airport – Terminal Building and Change Order #1 for Sheriff’s Office – Asbestos Abatement Change Order #1***

**COLUMBUS COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**  
**Ordinance making appropriations to the Columbus County**  
**Airport – New Terminal Building AV Block Grant Capital**  
**Project Fund**  
**for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2023**

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 Columbus County Airport – New Terminal Building AV Block Grant Capital Project pursuant to G.S. 159 -13.2 for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023.

Source of Revenue		Current Budget	Changes	Revised Budget
51-3461-432001	AV Block Grant	\$ 62,619	\$ 31,870	\$ 94,489
Total Estimated Revenues - Airport - New Terminal Building AV Block Grant				\$ 94,489
Project Appropriations		Current Budget	Changes	Revised Budget
51-4542-432001	Administrative Expenses	\$ 1,500	\$ -	\$ 1,500
51-4542-548012	Preliminary Engineering Testing	\$ 500	\$ 20,590	\$ 21,090
51-4542-519034	Engineering Services Basic Fees	\$ 60,619	\$ 11,280	\$ 71,899
Total Project Appropriation - Airport - New Terminal Building AV Block Grant				\$ 94,489

**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 Ordinance shall be made available to the Budget Officer, the Project Manager, and the Finance Officer for direction in carrying out this project.

This Capital Project shall become effective on November 20, 2023.  
 ADOPTED, this 20th day of November 2023.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Ricky Bullard, Chairman  
 Columbus County Board of Commissioners

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Jana Nealey, Clerk to the Board



November 8, 2023

County of Columbus  
604 N. Thompson Street  
Whiteville, NC 28472  
Stuart Carroll  
[scarroll@columbusco.org](mailto:scarroll@columbusco.org)

Re: Change Order/30-23-1420/Asbestos Abatement/Columbus County Sheriff's Office

Dear Mr. Carroll,  
Retro Environmental, Inc., is pleased to submit the following change order for the above referenced project. Retro proposes to provide all the necessary labor, equipment, material and supervision to perform the following:

- Remove and dispose of approximately 7,000SF of asbestos containing flooring and associated mastic.
- Remove and dispose of approximately 1,200LF of asbestos containing pipe insulation and visible debris from within the crawlspace.
- Price includes removal of carpet and plywood as construction debris, this material will be left on site.
- Price excludes 3<sup>rd</sup> party air monitoring and inspection.

Lump Sum Price For This Work.....\$67,900.00  
This work should be completed in 12-15 work shifts.

Expectation/Exclusions:

- A) Area and/or final air samples.
- B) Commercial general asbestos liability insurance is included.
- C) Retro to have full and unrestricted use of water and electricity.
- D) All electrical, mechanical and plumbing cut, caps and "make-safes" shall be performed by others.

Payment is due upon completion of work and receipt of invoice including emailed invoices. It is understood that we shall not be held liable for any loss, damage or delays caused by fire, strikes or material stolen after delivery upon premises, lockouts, act of God, or the public enemy, accidents, boycotts, material shortages, disturbed labor conditions, delayed delivery of material from sellers/suppliers, force majeure, inclement weather, floors, freight embargoes, causes of national emergencies, war or other causes beyond reasonable control. Price quoted in this contract is based upon present prices and upon condition that the proposal will be accepted within ten days. Project is accessible at all times and guaranteed uninterrupted work, also general conditions which are standard specifically for contractors in the construction industry, special conditions will be discussed with project manager as they occur. Should you have any questions or require any additional information please do not hesitate to contact this office.

Sincerely,

APPROVED SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

RETRO ENVIRONMENTAL, INC.  
James B. Wallace  
Branch Manager/Estimator  
910-833-2120

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Corporate: 5301 Enterprise Street Suite D, Sykesville, MD 21784 • (410) 552-9301 • Fax (410) 552-9305  
Pennsylvania: 9 Brennenman Circle, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050 • (717) 796-1851 • Fax (717) 769-6546  
Carolina: 6261 Beach Drive SW Ocean Isle Beach, NC 28469 (910)-833-2120

### **Agenda Item #17: DSS – MONTHLY UPDATE for OCTOBER 2023:**

Social Services Director Algernon McKenzie presented the monthly Social Services update for October 2023.

## **Monthly Administrative Update For October 2023 November 20, 2023 Meeting**

On October 11, 2023, an agency wide staff meeting was held. During this meeting I asked several questions to the staff giving them a chance to win prizes. There was great participation by staff. I then thanked the staff for all the hard work they have done and continue to do to better the lives of our citizens.

I discussed the county's decision to move to a 72 Hour Response Model for hurricanes and other disasters. I explained our responsibilities and roles to open shelters, as we have several employees who have never worked a shelter during a disaster.

The new travel policy was also reviewed with staff to make sure all were aware of the changes that have been adopted. Updates were given on Medicaid Expansion staff training and open enrollment.

Staff was encouraged to participate in the upcoming Veterans Day Parade and the Employee Appreciation Luncheon.

On October 12, 2023, I participated in the Directors Executive Board meeting. During the meeting we received updates on what DHHS is doing to prepare for the go live of Medicaid Expansion. There will be notices mailed out to about 260,000-300,000 individuals who will be determined eligible for Medicaid on December 1, 2023. These notices will include a number for them to call if they have questions.

A list of those individuals receiving Medicaid for Family Planning (MFP) will be sent to all counties sometime in November. Training on the Medicaid Rules will also be provided to county staff early November.

We were informed that funding to assist counties to implement Medicaid Expansion will continue through 2023, 2024, and 2025. Counties should see allocation letters coming in December. It was explained that some of the restrictions for the use of these funds have been lifted to allow more flexibility to counties to implement Medicaid Expansion.

We also received information about the Child & Family Services Review (CFSR) that North Carolina is preparing for. This is a federal review that all states must go through which no state has been able to pass. However, it is an opportunity to improve the Child Welfare System. DHHS staff recognizes that some state policies don't align with the federal policies and requirements. This review will be conducted by the Children's Bureau. This was a very informative meeting.

On October 19, 2023, we participated in the Community Resource Fair held at the Whiteville Recreation Center from 11AM to 1PM. Mrs. Darlene Jenkins-Parks, IMC Program Administrator and Mrs. Nola Wiles, Human Resources Technician represented our agency. They provided information about Medicaid Expansion and a list of vacancies, as well as information about the various services/benefits available at our agency. Our transitional unit put together goody bags that contained items that promoted the Foster to Adopt Program. This was our second year participating in this event.

On Sunday night October 22 – October 23, 2023, we had a two-year-old and a 15-year-old runaway in our agency. The after-hours worker, intake supervisor and foster care supervisor

spent the night at the agency along with some assistance from the sheriff's department. Unfortunately, there was some damage to our visitation room. Special thanks to our county facilities services staff for taking care of the damage.

Also on October 23, 2023, at the Board of County Commissioners Meeting, we were approved for four new IMC positions for Medicaid Expansion. These positions have been approved by the Office of State Human Resources and were posted on October 25, 2023. We are grateful for these positions as we prepare for Go-Live of Medicaid Expansion December 1, 2023.

On October 27, 2023, we dressed in pink in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness Month and took photos. We recognized one of our staff who is a survivor. Also on October 31, 2023, many staff dressed in costumes and took photos.

Our employee relations committee has periodic drawings for fall baskets and prizes. These are very enjoyable activities and some efforts to boost morale and show staff appreciation.

Lastly, during the month of October I attended twelve zoom and in person meetings.

#### ***HUMAN SERVICES BOARD REPORT***

**Dwella M. Hall, Program Manager**

#### **Vacancies/Updates/News for October, 2023**

**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 positions continue to be fully staffed as well. They are continuing to assist the Foster Care unit with incoming cases due to staff shortage. Our Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) conducted an in person consultation to review agency data, policy updates, and casework.

**In-Home Services:** The In-Home Services Unit continues to be fully staffed. This unit have seen some decrease in their caseload size indicating more successful outcomes and families can remain together in the home. They are also continuing to assist the Foster Care unit until they are fully staffed. Our Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) conducted an in person consultation to review agency data, policy updates, and casework.

**Foster Care/Permanency Planning:** The Foster Care Unit now have 3-vacancy. This unit has seen a tremendous amount of turnovers this year. While the number of children entering foster care seems to be decreasing; however, the social worker's caseloads will continue to increase due to staff shortage. There are currently 109 children in care. The CPS and In-home Services unit continue to assist Foster Care with case management duties, until staff can be hired and properly trained. Our Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) conducted an in person consultation to review agency data, policy updates, and casework.

**Transitional Unit:** The Transitional unit is fully staff. 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. Foster Home Licensing continues to work on completing more licensures to help increase the number of foster home in the county. The current MAPP class will be ending in 3 weeks; 3 families will be trained and licensed to accept foster children for placement. Our Regional Child Welfare Consultant (RCWC) conducted an in person consultation to review agency data, policy updates, and casework.

**Adult Services:** The Adult Services Unit has 1 vacancy. The position has been reposted. The supervisor continues to be out on medical leave and expected to return the end of November. This unit continues to serve ages 18 and above, with protective services, persons under guardianship, and special assistance in-home case management. The guardianship cases continue to demand extensive time due to severe and persistent mental illness and the lack of resources for this population.

**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. 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 a telephone consultation this month.

**Child Day Care:** The Child Day Care Unit continues to be fully staffed. The Supervisor and staff continue to work the over and under payment report to ensure proper payment is being made to county daycare providers. Day Care services are continuing to be provided and the state is working with county agencies and day cares to help them stay open as much as possible while providing a safe environment for children. Day Care slots within local Day Cares are limited at this time and many Day Cares are now on a waiting list. DSS staff continue to work with families to ensure their services stay in place while limiting contact to the telephone as much as possible. The agency has eliminated the waiting list and able to serve the public. Supervisor continue to ensure case transfers are received properly and sent in a timely manner.

**Program Integrity:** Program Integrity office visits are limited and telephone contact is encouraged, but office visits are possible. Repayment agreements are no longer relaxed, and recoupments are being received. Staff are working to clean up a backlog, establishing cases and repayment agreements, all while assisting with the Energy Programs.

**Energy Assistance:** CIP continues with the heating season which means helping with the main source of heat for the household. Applications continue to be available on EPASS where applicants can complete and submit applications on-line, but continue to be available in our lobby for pick up and completion. Two in-house staff and one temporary staff is currently processing applications and Program Integrity staff are assisting as needed.

**Economic Services Narrative     Darlene Jenkins-Parks, Income Maintenance Administrator**

### **Vacancies/Updates/News for October 2023**

**FNS Intake/Processing:** This FNS unit has (3) caseworker vacancies, interviews have been complete now pending the hiring process for (2) of the vacancies. The last trainee hired remains in the beginning of her training. The FNS Intake unit receives applications several ways including mail in/drop offs, e-pass (electronic) and in person. These applications continue coming in rapidly. This unit is working diligently to keep the cases processed in a timely manner. Everyone on the team still works hard individually and collectively.

**Food Nutrition Services Review:** The FNS Review team is fully staffed with (7) fully trained caseworkers, (1) trainee completing her 4<sup>th</sup> month & handling own case load, and (1) trainee starting to handle half of her caseload. Both FMLA workers have returned. The FNS unit now has 8 reports of EBT card skimming, replaced 7 of the 8 according to policy so far totaling \$1357.00, the remaining one was denied due to failure to provide affidavit by 9/27/23. FNS has had a lot of changes since July when PHE ended. Able bodied adults without dependents age limits changing has been a challenge with NCF issues and extra time spent correcting cases in which system failed to update. All staff have been trained & emailed to pay close attention to these cases to avoid agency errors due to NCF system updating issues.

**Family & Children Medicaid Intake/Processing Unit:** This unit is currently fully staffed with (5) experienced caseworkers. They intake & process all F&C applications including E-Pass, mail-in, FFM (Federal Marketplace), In-person, and agency referrals. In preparation for the December 1<sup>st</sup> Medicaid Expansion launch they have been attending Medicaid OST policy training and processing all other applications as quickly as possible in preparation.

**Family & Children Medicaid Review Unit:** This unit currently has (2) vacant caseworker positions. This unit is currently extremely busy with the ongoing of the CCU (Continuous Coverage Unwinding). The Medicaid review departments are currently being audited each month by the State to assure CCU policy is followed. Medicaid is constantly making changes to the CCU & Medicaid Expansion guidelines, which causes more confusion. While dealing with the staff shortage, policy and client changes, daily updates on Medicaid expansion and training the staff are feeling overwhelmed. The unit supervisor has been having staff meetings regularly to have open discussion and looking for any techniques that can assist.

**Adult Medicaid Intake/Processing Unit:** This unit currently has (1) vacant position. The unit is gearing up for the additional applications due to the annual open enrollment for FFM (Federal Market Place) effective 10/15 and LIS (Low Income Subsidy) effective 11/1. This will cause an influx of applications for the Adult Medicaid Intake & Processing unit. They are in training for implementation of Medicaid Expansion (MXP) and putting procedures in place.

**Adult Medicaid Review Unit:** The Adult Review unit is currently fully staffed with (7) caseworkers. This unit is currently processing reviews ending the months of Oct., Nov., and Dec. while keeping up with the CCU guideline, trying to keep up with all the phone calls, mail, changes with new CCU guidelines, with the addition of MBQ/E reviews that all end each December and learning the upcoming Medicaid expansion policy. During our unit staff meeting we discussed all the new changes that was coming up with the new MXP Expansion, and discuss the day to day changes with policy. It is an extremely stressful time.

**Long Term Care, Community Alternative Program & Special Assistance Unit:** The unit is fully staffed with (4) IMC III. These caseworkers stay busy with new applicants, change of circumstance changes, maintenance and reviews.

**Non-Emergency Medicaid Transportation (NEMT) Unit:** This unit is fully staffed with (2) workers, the department handles daily calls, new and updated assessments, scheduling for pickups from vendors, as well as billing for van and mileage.

**Housekeeping:** The unit is currently fully staffed with (2) workers, there is (1) worker on FMLA expected to return November 27<sup>th</sup>. They maintain the daily sanitation and cleanliness of the agency.

**Child Support:** The establishment unit currently has (2) child support agent vacancies & the enforcement unit has (2) child support agent vacancies. The department has (2) trainees started 9/21, (1) trainee started 7/21 & (1) started 3/21. The supervisors and lead staff are working to get train them. This department has (1) experienced enforcement agent and (1) establishment agent with less than a year experience. Happy to announce that Melinda Batten began her career change on October 23<sup>rd</sup> as the Enforcement Child Support Lead Agent. The department prepared a total 252 cases for court action this month. The Child Support department completed 167 Orders in the month of October. This department has been short staffed for a while and seems to continue to have a turn over issue. The Supervisors, Lead Agents and Program Administrator are working together to see if there is anything that we can improve on including the selection and retention of agents in this department. We are in the process of having additional training from the state in November or December for all trainees.

**Thank you:** As the Economic Services Program Administrator, I would like to thank the County Commissioner for the approval of the (4) additional IMC II positions to help assist with upcoming Medicaid Expansion program. We have advertised and praying that we can find the right individuals for these positions.

## **October 2023 Human Services**

### **Adult Services (APS)**

APS Reports Accepted: 6  
 County Wards: 27  
 Number of Payee Cases: 11  
 Adults Served APS: 0  
 Number of Medicaid Transportation Trips: 1,069  
 Amount Requested for Reimbursement: \$29,038.03

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

Reports Accepted: 31  
 Reports Screened out: 22  
 Families Receiving In-Home Services: 33  
 Children Served: 69  
 Contacts with Families Monthly: 371  
 Assessments: 17

**Foster Care**

Foster Children in Foster Homes: 98  
 Children Placed Outside County: 41  
 Agency Adoptions: 0  
 Pending Adoptions: 11  
 Total Foster Homes Licensed: 8  
 Total Children in Foster Care: 109

**Work First Employment (TANF)**

Applications Taken: 15  
 Applications Approved: 6  
 Individuals Receiving Benefits: 145  
 Entered Employment: 0  
 Number in Non-Paid Work Experience: 0

**October 2023**

**Human Services (continued)**

**Program Integrity**

Collections for Fraud: \$7,112.27  
 New Referrals: 3  
 Cases Established: 0

**Day Care**

Children Receiving Day Care Assistance: 476  
 Children on the Waiting List: 0  
 Amount Spent on Day Care Services: \$268,003.00

**October 2023**

**Economic Services**



**Food & Nutrition**

Applications Taken: 168

Applications Approved: 1244

Active Cases: 6,227

Benefits Issued: \$2,070,261.00

Participants Served: 12,256

**Adult Medicaid**

Applications Taken: 88

Cases Terminated: 84

Redeterminations: 396

Applications Processed: 111

**Family & Children's Medicaid**

Applications Taken: 141

Applications Processed: 178

Redeterminations: 1,203

Total Medicaid Cases: 14,937

Total Individuals Receiving: 22,533

**Child Support**

Absent Parents Located: 118

Orders Enforced: 887

Active Cases: 3,711

Collections: \$395,933.00

Respectfully submitted,  
Algernon McKenzie

**Agenda Item #18: APPOINTMENTS/RE-APPOINTMENTS/REPLACEMENTS: STAFF is REQUESTING APPOINTMENTS, REAPPOINTMENTS or REPLACEMENTS to the FOLLOWING BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COUNCILS.**

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

**Zone I:**        **Barbara Featherson**  
**Zone II:**       **Chris Smith**  
**Zone III:**      **Giles E. Byrd**  
**Zone IV:**      **Lavern Coleman**

**Zone V:**        **Brent Watts**  
**Zone VI:**       **Ricky Bullard**  
**Zone VII:**      **Scott Floyd**

COMMITTEE	ZONE/EB	PERSON(S)	EXP. DATE	BOARD ACTION
Board of Adjustments	IV	Ronald McPherson	9/30/2023	reappointed
Board of Adjustments	VI	VACANT	9/30/2023	HOLD
Board of Adjustments	VII	Kathryn Faulk (Resigned)	9/30/2024	HOLD

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

**MOTION:**

At 7:27 P.M. a Motion was made by Commissioner Watts and second by Vice Chairman Coleman to recess regular session and enter into Columbus County Water and Sewer Districts I, II, III, IV and V.

**Agenda Item #19: APPROVAL of WATER and SEWER COMBINATION MINUTES:**

- November 06, 2023 (5 sets)

**MOTION:**

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

**Agenda Item #20: WATER and SEWER DISTRICT I – APPROVAL to RECEIVE OWNERSHIP of LAKE TABOR ESTATES DEVELOPMENT GROUP WATER SYSTEM:**

Public Utilities Director Harold Nobles requested that Columbus County accept ownership of the Lake Tabor Estates Development Group Water System.

**MOTION:**

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

**THE PHIPPS LAW FIRM, PLLC**  
WILLIAM W. PHIPPS  
ATTORNEY AT LAW  
905 PINEWAY BLVD.  
D.C. BOX 35  
TABOR CITY, NORTH CAROLINA 28463


November 8, 2023

Mr. Harold P. Nobles  
Columbus County Public Utilities Director  
205 Lee Avenue  
Whiteville, NC 28472  
hpnobles@columbusco.org

Re: Gift of Water Line to Columbus County from Lake Tabor Estates Development Group

Dear Mr. Nobles:

I enjoyed speaking with you by phone today. I am the attorney who represents Lake Tabor Estates Development Group, a NC General Partnership, and I am also a General Partner of the Lake Tabor Estates Development Group. In accordance with our conversation, Lake Tabor Estates Development Group, the owner of the water lines and associated equipment, hereby gift to the County of Columbus and/or the Columbus County Public Utilities the water system that it owns for operation of the water system and maintenance of the same. The system for the first phase is 100% complete, but the remainder of the system, phase two, is not anticipated to be completed until the current builder exercises its option to purchase 20 additional lots. We do not yet know of their commitment to purchase the additional lots, and therefore have not embarked upon completing the system within the subdivision until the builder exercises its option to purchase the additional lots. I trust that this is sufficient to constitute the delivery of the gift of the water system that is currently in place in Lake Tabor Estates and if you need or require anything else, please feel free to contact me at the phone numbers or email address on the letterhead. With all good wishes, I am

Very Sincerely,  
  
William W. Phipps

WWP/bp

**Agenda Item #21: WATER and SEWER DISTRICT V – APPROVAL to RECEIVE OWNERSHIP of COTTONWOOD PLACE DEVELOPMENT PHASE I WATER SYSTEM:**

Public Utilities Director Harold Nobles requested that Columbus County accept ownership of the Cottonwood Place Development Phase I Water System.

**MOTION:**

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

## **Cottonwood Place Development LLC**

50 Polo Pony Dr. Colorado Springs, CO. 80906 719-339-7555 711 Carolina Beach Ave N Carolina Beach, NC. 28428  
719 499 1373

Columbus County Utilites  
Mr. Harold Nobles, Director  
205 Lee Ave  
Whiteville, NC. 28472

Re: Cottonwood Place Development Phase 1 Transfer of Water system.

Mr. Nobles please accept this letter as our official transmission and request to transfer the public water system installed in Cottonwood Place Development Phase 1. It is our desire upon acceptance by the Columbus County Commissioners to transfer to the County the ownership of the water system and all components, lines, valves, services and other public water infrastructure. Please let us know if you need any additional information to facilitate this transfer.

Respectfully,  
Steve Shuttleworth  
Member Manager  
Cottonwood Place Development LLC

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

**MOTION:**

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

**Agenda Item #22: COMMENTS:** Commissioners; County Manager

### **A. Board of Commissioners**

**Commissioner Featherson commented:**

Chadbourn will have their Christmas Parade on December 2<sup>nd</sup>. I'd like to say thank you to Dr. English and Southeastern Community College for hosting the Chris Wilcox Foundation event this past weekend which they provided Turkeys and the trimmings for approximately 1,000 families. Thank you to Kenneth Clark from the DOT for trying to find the funds to fix the crosswalk in Chadbourn. There is also an issue with the incomplete work on 410 North, the "patching" of the road has caused some issues. We would like for Mr. Clark to come before the board and update us on some of the road work. I wish everyone a safe and wonderful holiday weekend.

**Commissioner Floyd commented:**

I'd just like to wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

**Commissioner Smith commented:**

I'd like for you all to notice the lights at the courthouse they are beautiful. Happy Thanksgiving.

**Commissioner Watts commented:**

I'd just like to wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving. I urge you to spend time with your family.

**Commissioner Byrd commented:**

I had mentioned before about the John Deere school at Wake Tech, Dr. English would you please speak on that.

*Dr. English commented that they are in the process of that and they have been able to get some of the Certification courses that someone would take as an employee there but in order to teach a full curriculum we would have to comply with their requirements in order for John Deere to release that information. We are looking into how to do that as well as the avenue of partnering with Wake Tech to provide what potential students and John Deere staff would need.*

**Commissioner Byrd continued:**

I mentioned the tree in the culvert on the Cerro Gordo property and to reiterate the road issues Commissioner Feather was speaking about, Hwy 410 and 211 also have some road issues and those are our main areas of travel for people going to the beaches. I wish everyone a happy Thanksgiving

**Vice Chairman Coleman commented:**

Thanks to the county employees for everything and I encourage you to spend time with your family and have a Happy Thanksgiving. Reiglewood is having their Christmas Parade and event on December 2<sup>nd</sup> as well and I encourage you all to go and have a good time there will plenty of things for the children to do.

**Chairman Bullard commented:**

I just like to say have a Happy Thanksgiving, and say a prayer for the ones who are not as fortunate as we are and remember those as we go through the holidays, you never know what burdens people have.

**County Manager****County Manager Eddie Madden commented:**

This evening meeting with as a reminder, our offices will be closed Thursday and Friday for the Thanksgiving holiday, also, one week from tonight the 27th is the interlocal government meeting here in the in this building on the fourth floor at 6:30 P.M. Please plan to attend and all of our municipal board members will be here, so if you can come, we will truly appreciate it. Our next commissioners meeting is December 4 that will be the one and only meeting of the month unless other circumstances should arise. At that meeting we will be recognizing Algernon McKenzie and Julie Strickland for their years of service to Columbus County as we celebrate their retirement together and we look forward to doing that December 7. Is the employee appreciation luncheon at the fairgrounds. I know there's been some reference to parades we've printed some of those you've mentioned some others that we have not one that I noted was the December 2<sup>nd</sup> is Whiteville, Reiglewood, Lake Waccamaw, and Chadbourn Parade. I think there are four parades on the same day, so you'll have to figure out how you gonna cover that but I do wanna remind you all that and I think that's it. Happy Thanksgiving, sir.

**Agenda Item #23: ADJOURNMENT:****MOTION:**

At 7.47 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