

POLK COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' PUBLIC HEARING & REGULAR MEETING
October 17, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.
R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice
Womack Building
Columbus, NC
MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Gage, Vice-Chair Holbert, Commissioner Bradley, Commissioner Gasperson and Commissioner Owens. Also in attendance were County Manager Pittman, County Attorney Berg, Clerk to the Board Fehrmann, media and citizens.

1. Call to Order of the Public Hearing Regarding the FY 2018 NCDOT Community Transportation Grant Applications (2) – Chair Gage called the public hearing to order. The purpose of the public hearing was to take public comment on two FY 2018 Transportation Department grant applications: Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities Program, and Section 5311 Community Transportation Program. Transportation Director Dianne Timberlake presented the information. The public hearing was properly advertised in the *Tryon Daily Bulletin*. The information is included on file in the agenda packet under Agenda Item #13.
2. Citizen Comments – There were none.
3. Commissioner Comments – Commissioners received clarification that the \$70,348 portion of FY 2018 state funding will only be provided if the Foothills Express service continues in FY 2018.
4. Adjournment – Commissioner Bradley moved to adjourn the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously.
5. Call to Order of the Regular Meeting – Chair Gage called the regular meeting to order.
6. Invocation – Rev. Warren Elliot gave the invocation.
7. Pledge of Allegiance – MSG Bevin Corbin (retired) led the pledge.
8. Approval of Agenda – County Attorney Berg asked that “economic development, G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4)” be deleted from Agenda Item #18, Closed Session. Commissioner Owens moved to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Commissioner Bradley and the motion carried unanimously.
9. Consent Agenda
Approval of the October 3, 2016, public hearings (2) and regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Bradley moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously.
10. Citizen Comments – There were none.

11. Polk County Selected as the Regional Site for the Celebration of Veteran's Day 2016 – MSG Bevin Corbin (retired), president of the Polk County Veterans Association, reported the county was selected by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as one of sixty regional sites for the celebration of Veterans Day for the third year in a row.

Chair Gage moved to switch the positions of Agenda Item #12, FY 2018 Transportation Department Grant Applications (2) and Agenda Item #13, Foothills Express Service Recommendation, seconded by Commissioner Gasperson and the motion carried unanimously.

12. Foothills Express Service Recommendation – Ms. Timberlake reported Foothills Express ridership is low, with only 386 people taking advantage of the fixed route service from its inception in November 2015 through August 2016. Ms. Timberlake recommended a modified Foothills Express service continue to be provided through June of 2017 for evaluation purposes. Ms. Timberlake proposed that, effective November 21, 2016, one bus will run the deviated fixed route from 8:30 A.M. to 2:45 P.M. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and the bus will only stop when passengers are waiting at a bus stop. These modifications will result in a projected annual cost savings of approximately \$20,000. Providing the service through the recommended evaluation period will allow the retention of available state funding for the operations budget, and allow for more marketing exposure of the service. The Transportation Advisory Board unanimously supports the recommendation. Following Board discussion, Ms. Timberlake presented a promotional Foothills Express video - created free of charge - to be used in increased marketing efforts. It was the consensus of the Board to accept Ms. Timberlake's proposal for the Foothills Express service to continue through the end of the 2016-2017 fiscal year, and to be modified wherein one bus will run the deviated fixed route from 8:30 A.M. to 2:45 P.M. on Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and the bus will only stop when passengers are waiting at a bus stop.

13. FY 2018 Transportation Department Grant Applications (2) – Chair Gage moved to approve the FY2018 Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities Program grant application and resolution, seconded by Commissioner Bradley and the motion carried unanimously. Chair Gage moved to approve the FY 2018 Section 5311 Community Transportation Program grant application and resolution, seconded by Commissioner Bradley and the motion carried unanimously.

14. North Carolina Department of Commerce NC Broadband Survey – Keith Conover, Technical Assistance Director for the NC Broadband Western Region, said his job is to provide direct technical assistance to local communities seeking to expand their broadband capacity. Mr. Conover offered to provide support in assessing local resources, developing broadband plans, and planning new infrastructure. He also recommended a broadband committee be formed in order to move forward with a county survey. The survey would determine how many households in the county do not have access to broadband service. However, one downside of conducting such a survey is that it tends to create an expectation with the citizens that broadband service will definitely be provided in the future to those households

- not currently served. Mr. Conover said counties he has worked with that have formed active broadband committees typically have seen further broadband deployment within the county and, with the formation of a committee, funding for broadband expansion could be available from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), a regional economic development agency that represents a partnership of federal, state, and local government. County Manager Pittman said PANGAEA, a local non-profit internet service provider, may be interested in participating in this initiative. Mr. Conover said he is experienced in engaging a wide range of partners in broadband projects, which is very important because each community is unique and a “one-size-fits-all” approach to broadband expansion will not work, and looks forward to working with Polk County on this project. It was the consensus of the Board that County Manager Pittman create a broadband committee and move forward with the county broadband survey.
15. Manager’s Report – County Manager Pittman reported the application for financing the Law Enforcement Complex has been submitted to the Local Government Commission.
 16. Volunteer Board for Review – Two Transportation Advisory Board applications for two vacancies were reviewed.
 17. Commissioner Comments – The Commissioners thanked everyone for coming out.
 18. Closed Session – Commissioner Owens moved to enter into closed session for the purpose of attorney-client privilege, G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3), seconded by Commissioner Bradley and the motion carried unanimously.
 19. Return to Open Session – Commissioner Owens moved to return to open session, seconded by Commissioner Bradley and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Gasperson moved to extend the agreement with Hwy. 74/108 LLC to purchase the future Law Enforcement Complex property until November 30, 2016, seconded by chair Gage and the motion carried unanimously.
 20. Adjournment – Commissioner Gasperson moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:

POLK COUNTY BOARD
OF COMMISSIONERS

Beth Fehrmann
Clerk to the Board

Michael V. Gage
Chair