

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
January 19, 2021 - 7:00 PM
R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice Womack Building Columbus, NC
Columbus, NC
MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Melton, Vice-Chairman Beiler, Commissioner Moore, Commissioner Overholt, and Commissioner Yoder. Also in attendance were County Manager Pittman, Attorney Berg, and Clerk to the Board High. Commissioner Moore, media and citizens participated remotely.

1. Public Hearing

A. Call the Public Hearing to Order - Chairman Melton. The purpose of the public hearing was to take public comments on proposed new road names, Beauty Hill Lane, Foch Mountain Trail, Morgan Run, Dragonfly Trail, Wildcat Way, Friendly Hills Lane, the public hearing was properly advertised in the Tryon Daily Bulletin.

B. Citizen Comments. There were two comments submitted.

C. Commissioner Comments.

Chairman Melton said since there is already a Dragonfly Lane, the name to be considered is Dragonfly Mountain Trail.

D. Adjourn Public Hearing.

Vice-Chairman Beiler moved to adjourn the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Call to Order Regular Meeting - Chairman Melton.

3. Invocation - Commissioner Yoder.

Commissioner Beiler introduced Jason Schlabach the founder of Door of Hope Ministries who gave the invocation.

4. Pledge of Allegiance - Vice-Chairman Beiler.

5. Chairman and Commissioner Comments.

Chairman Melton requested the comments read by the Commissioners be entered verbatim into these minutes:

Chairman Melton-

I grew up in Polk County, graduated from High School here and have formed many life long friendships with the good people of Polk County. This is the best place on earth to live, in my opinion.

As I sat the other day and watched the violence unfolding in Washington, DC, I was stunned to realize this was actually happening in our beloved

country. I had tuned in to watch the debate concerning objections raised over the votes in the swing states.

However, this was all stopped until the wee hours of the morning because of the invasion and violence at the Capitol building, and most Americans were deprived of the opportunity to see our members of Congress have this debate. From this point on, all the focus had shifted to the protesters.

I must say that I am fully supportive of peaceful demonstrations and protests, but I am adamantly against lawless and violent protests, destruction of property and especially loss of life. Each life is precious to God and cannot be replaced.

As Chair of the Board of Commissioners, I have been in conference with our Sheriff, Chief of Police and County Manager; and we are all in complete agreement that this type of violence will not be tolerated in Polk County. We are very committed to the safety and well being of the citizens of Polk County, and will do everything in our power to make sure they are protected. The year 2020 was a year of hatred and destruction, as we watched cities being burned to the ground, business owners lose their places of business as they saw their lifelong dreams destroyed right before their eyes, and our great law enforcement personnel threatened, injured and killed all across this country.

We can do better than this and we must do better, for the sake of those coming along after us. This is not a left vs. right problem, not a Liberal vs. Conservative problem; it is good vs. evil. Let us not get caught up in the anger and hatred, but remember the great commandment: Love God with all your heart and love others as yourself.

I challenge you this week to seek out a law enforcement officer and tell him or her how much you appreciate them and that you are praying for their protection and well being. Let's determine in our hearts that we won't allow Polk County to become infected with hatred and anger, like some of the rest of this country has become. We have an obligation to our children and young people to be the best example that we can be to them.

Vice-Chairman Beiler-

Let me first start by addressing some things that are taking part in our Nation tonight. This past year has been a very dark and trying time in our nation.

The Covid 19 pandemic, the social and racial unrest last summer, and the intense and contentious election season that we are still seeing unfolding before our eyes. I want to speak specifically to only the citizens of the greatest county in our country. Polk County. A couple of months ago, a friend of mine asked me, you are always bragging about that Polk County is the best place to live, what makes this county so special? I told him that is easy. It's the people. Our citizens are what make this a special place to live. When I was elected as a Commissioner I was elected to work for the best of ALL of our citizens. It does not matter what letter you have behind your name, it does not matter if you have an R or a D or if you are an independent. Society today wants to put us in boxes, right, left, black, white, Hispanic it does not matter what skin color you are, I am here to work for your good and what is best for the citizens of our county. Tonight I want to tell you that I do not care what your party affiliation is, I will fight for you and I want the best for all the

citizens of this county. I call on our citizens to take inventory of what WE can do for each other. Lets rely on the best part of what is on the inside of each one of us. Lets take care of our neighbors and people that we come in contact with each and every day. Let's focus on the 80 percent of what we agree on and not the 20 percent that we disagree on. When we focus on what divides us, the division gets wider and wider and we began to feel like our neighbor is our enemy. I call on our citizens to engage. engage to help those we see in need. To treat others fairly. As someone who is much wiser then myself said. "treat others the way I want to be treated". I look at what is happening in our beloved capitol in our beloved nation and I ask. Is this what we have come too? My heart breaks for our nation when I see violence playing out in our streets. I do not care what the cause is. Darkness will never drive out darkness. Violence will not quell violence it will lead to more hate, anger and more violence. I understand that we all have difference of opinion but that is what makes this country great. We can all have a difference of opinion and still love each other. We have somewhere bought into the theory that if you do not agree with me then you are my enemy. Enemies are hated, enemies are meant to be defeated. We need to see that our ideology and the boxes we put people in are meant to divide. We the citizens of this county are better than that. Let us lift one another up, let us defend one another. Let us have civilized conversation with one another, but let us leave our anger out of these conversations. Let us focus on what unites us rather than divides us. These values are things that make this county great and the greatest place to raise a family. God bless the United States Of America and may God bless Polk County.

Commissioner Overholt-

To echo this resolution, I could not be more proud of our county and the way we have handled and responded to the current state of affairs in our Country. Whether it be our response to COVID or our response to the civil unrest that our Country is experiencing all over the Nation. Polk County has always risen to the challenge and has been a great example what it looks like when relationships are more important than disagreements.

My encouragement to Polk County is that we would not lose sight of that in the coming days. The relationships we have in this County is why we have been so blessed and why we have had the success we have had. We have worked together despite any political differences to accomplish what is best for the citizens of Polk County. I am proud to live in this county and I know we will continue be an example for those around us.

Commissioner Yoder said he appreciated all the comments, and challenged citizens to look for opportunities to help each other. He said have a heart, give a hand, not hate.

Commissioner Moore said as an elected official, he will work hard for the betterment of all citizens of the county.

6. Approval of Agenda

A. Commissioner Yoder moved to approve the agenda, seconded by

Commissioner Overholt and the motion carried unanimously.

7. Consent Agenda

Vice-Chairman Beiler moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Commissioner Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

- A. December 7, 2020 Regular and Organizational meeting minutes.
- B. Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) - Submit for review and comments Community Action Opportunities, Inc. CSBG application, and Community Anti-Poverty Plan.

8. Citizen Comment(s)

Eleven citizens submitted comments read by Chairman Melton.

9. NC Geological Survey - Landslide Map Update.

Richard (Rick) M. Wooten, P.G. Senior Geologist for Geohazards and Engineering Geology Asheville Regional Office – North Carolina Geological Survey Division of Energy, Minerals and Land Resources Dept. of Environmental Quality gave a presentation on the landslide mapping project, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes. Mr. Wooten said the landslide inventory for Polk County has been completed, and is accessible through a web map viewer available on their website. He explained the next steps to be statistical analysis of the landslide data. The Commissioners thanked Mr. Wooten for his presentation.

10. 2021 Polk County Revaluation Information.

Gary Eanes, Wampler-Eanes Appraisal Group gave a presentation about the revaluation process a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes. Mr. Eanes said the process and guidelines are set by the state, and including an appeal process for anyone who disagrees with the valuation. Melissa Bowlin, Tax Administrator said the revaluation notices are currently being printed, and will begin to be mailed to property owners the first week of February 2021. Chairman Melton asked the Clerk to have copies of tonight's revaluation presentation available for citizens who may have questions regarding the revaluation process. Manager Pittman said it will also be posted on the county website. Chairman Melton asked Mr. Eanes to clarify for the record if the Commissioners have any control over setting values on properties. Mr. Eanes stated the only role the Commissioners have in the process is to set the tax rate, they do not determine property valuations. Commissioner Yoder made the statement, although property values have increased 37% that doesn't mean everyone's did. He said the Commissioners have not increased the tax rate. Manager Pittman said the increased valuation of 37%, does not necessarily mean an increased tax bill. The revaluation is to true up property values throughout the county, and is statutorily required.

11. Green Creek Volunteer Fire and Rescue request to extend the waterline.

Jeremy Gregg, Green Creek Volunteer Fire and Rescue Chief, formally requested an extension of the waterline on Pea Ridge Road to the site of their planned substation. Chairman Melton asked if a well system was an option for the new substation. Chief Gregg said a well could work, but the waterline would also permit hydrants to be installed increasing fire safety for the community. Manager Pittman said the waterline extension policy states a required participation fee that past boards have waived for schools and fire departments. He requested a consensus of the Board to get an engineer design and a cost estimate of the total project. He said if the Board agrees, he will bring the information back for full consideration. The Board agreed to have Manager Pittman move forward.

12. Resolution to assure Polk County citizens their safety is our top priority and to support their constitutional rights.

RESOLUTION TO ASSURE POLK COUNTY CITIZENS THEIR SAFETY IS OUR TOP

PRIORITY AND TO SUPPORT THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

Whereas, the United States is going through troubling times of civil unrest at the National

Level; and

Whereas, the Covid-19 situation seems to be accelerating with more infections and deaths on

the horizon; and

Whereas, the Covid-19 response tactics are changing to a focus of vaccination from a focus on

testing; and

Whereas, most of the Polk County Employees are deemed "essential" employees and have

worked continuously throughout the entire Covid-19 event.

Therefore, be it resolved, that the Polk County Board of Commissioners' wants to assure all of

the citizens of Polk County that they have and will continue to keep Polk County's needs as

their top priority through the difficult times that we are facing.

Further, the Polk County Board of Commissioners' wants to thank all of the employees and

elected officials in Polk County for the outstanding job they have done and will continue to do

throughout this time of crisis to keep the citizens of Polk County safe and secure.

Further, while we support the right of all citizens to peacefully protest, we wholeheartedly

condemn any action that is violent or criminal in nature and encourage our state and federal

leaders to work together for the betterment of our nation. Vice-Chairman Beiler

moved to adopt the Resolution to assure Polk County citizens their safety is our top priority and to support their constitutional rights, seconded by Commissioner Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Proposed New Road Names - Beauty Hill Ln (Private Road-off SR1346) Township: Columbus Foch Mountain Trail (Private road-off SR NC108) Township: Columbus Morgan Run— Private Road off PVT Spicer Cove Rd Begins in Henderson County Township: Saluda Dragonfly Trail- Private Road off SR1306 Township: Cooper Gap Wildcat Way- Private road off- Lake Adger Rd off SR1161 Township: Cooper Gap Friendly Hills Lane- Private Road off- County Club Rd SR1107 Township: Tryon- Outside

Commissioner Yoder moved to approve new road names Beauty Hill Ln; Foch Mountain Trail; Morgan Run; Dragonfly Mountain Trail; Wildcat Way; Friendly Hills Lane, seconded by Vice-Chairman Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

14. Board of Commissioner meeting time change discussion - Chairman Melton.

Chairman Melton said at the las meeting he proposed changing the time of the meetings. After discussion, it was decided the meeting time would be changed to 5:00 pm. for a trial period through March.

15. Volunteer Board Application(s)

A. Application for Review - Karen Davidson, Library Board of Trustees.

16. Adjournment

Attest:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS

Ange High
Clerk to the Board

Tommy W. Melton
Chairman