

**Minutes of the
Albemarle Commission Board of
Delegates October 17, 2019
6:00PM**

Opening

Chairwoman Tracey A. Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

Chairwoman Johnson added to the amended Agenda under Item 12.B, a Closed Session. Commissioner Lloyd Griffin requested the Closed Session be moved to Item 14. Chairwoman Johnson agreed and the Closed Session was moved.

Invocation

Commissioner Robert Kirby led the Invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Commissioner Rob Ross led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Determination of Quorum

The presence of a quorum was determined by Clerk and Administrative & Benefits Coordinator, Ashley Stallings, with Thirteen (13) Members present.

| <u>Name</u> | <u>County</u> |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Clayton Riggs | Camden |
| Sandra Duckwall | Camden |
| Robert Kirby | Chowan |
| Harriett DeHart | Chowan |
| Elizabeth White | Currituck |
| Rob Ross | Dare |
| Linda Hofler | Gates |
| Earl Pugh | Hyde |
| Lloyd Griffin | Pasquotank |
| Fondella Leigh | Perquimans |
| Wallace Nelson-Alternate | Perquimans |
| Jordan Davis | Tyrrell |
| Tracey A. Johnson | Washington |
| <u>Absent Members</u> | |
| Paul Beaumont | Currituck |
| Howard Swain | Dare |
| Marion Gilbert | Ex Officio |

Partners, staff, and guests present:

Attorney John Leidy of Hornthal, Riley, Ellis and Maland was present.

Staff members:

Melody Wilkins, Executive Director

Angela Welsh, RPO Director

Ashley Stallings, Clerk and Administrative & Benefits Coordinator

Guests and Partners

Scott Curtis, PhD, East Carolina University

Derek A Dorazio, Atlanta Regional Census Center

Agenda (VOTE):

Commissioner Fondella Leigh motioned to adopt the agenda as amended, seconded by Commissioner Jordan Davis, motion carried unanimously.

Approval of September 2019 Minutes (VOTE):

Commissioner Linda Hofler motioned to approve the Minutes as presented, seconded by At-Large Member, Harriet DeHart, motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment:

None.

Old Business:

a. Approval of the August Minutes (VOTE)

August minutes were presented for approval, as there was an absence of a quorum at the September meeting. Commissioner Davis motioned to approve the Minutes as presented, seconded by Commissioner Clayton Riggs, motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

a. Scott Curtis, PhD, East Carolina University

Executive Director Melody Wilkins introduced Scott Curtis, who came to speak about NOAA funded projects benefitting Eastern North Carolina. Mr. Curtis comes from East Carolina University's Department of Geography, Planning, and Environment.

Mr. Curtis, an Atmospheric and Climate Scientist by training, discussed developing a team for understanding a combination of flood hazards through an economic and health lens. The motivations behind this project are back-to-back disasters, known as cascading hazards, such as Hurricanes Matthew and Florence. Mr. Curtis said they cover the coastal counties from the Virginia border to the South Carolina border.

Commissioner Ross asked if the increase in back-to-back frequency is a fact or if historically there have been back-to-back disasters. Mr. Curtis stated it is likely a fact, but he thought where economics comes in, with increased building in the coastal areas, the frequency is more now than in the past. Mr. Curtis said they are looking at more recent events for a hazard study.

With little understanding of combined hazards, the managing and planning of them is rare. Due to the lack of resources, only a few rural areas have looked at the economic and health impacts or effects. There is often a divide between Emergency Officials and Planners. Part of this project would target these two entities and bring them together to enhance resiliency thinking.

The study will look at all 3 types of flooding: storm surge, river flooding, and precipitation/flash flooding. These hazards require a different approach to resiliency. The study area is focused on Hurricane's Matthew and Florence, and overlaps with the disaster declaration area.

Chairwoman Johnson spoke about impacts on rural areas. Neglect in taking care of drainage in some areas may have contributed to the flooding in areas that hadn't flooded in the past. Mr. Curtis stated drainage is something they are going to look at, as drainage issues have been brought up in other meetings he attended.

Three objectives of the study are perceived risks & needs, understanding data, and cooperation & production of communication and knowledge for resiliency.

Mr. Curtis hoped having a co-partnership to better understand flooding would make this study work. They would like to have the first focus groups meet in February in Greenville, NC. Mr.

Curtis is targeting Emergency Managers, Planners, Elected Officials, and other potential groups for the co-partnership. Through co-partnerships, the study hopes to provide a quantitative numbers overview of flood health and economic impacts and risks, assessment of best practices, and new tools for better disaster management and communication.

The Board had a discussion about the recent storm that came through and its impact in Dare County. They expressed the need for better communication for unnamed storms.

RPO Director Angela Welsh spoke about resiliency. Director Welsh asked about the health aspects of Mr. Curtis' study. Mr. Curtis stated the two risks they are focusing on are respiratory and psychological issues. Director Welsh asked if they were also looking at king tides. Mr. Curtis replied yes.

Commissioner Griffin stated if the sand dunes were built up, we would not have these problems. He spoke about the protection of the birds on Pea Island. Commissioner Griffin also stated the NC DOT has the biggest impact on inland flooding. Finally, he explained Elizabeth City lost 7 feet of water during the last hurricane. The fresh water and salt water mixed and changed the biology of the water when it came back.

b. Derek A Dorazio, Atlanta Regional Census Center

Chairwoman Johnson introduced Derek Dorazio from the Atlanta Regional Census Center. Mr. Dorazio, who is from Wake County, covers our region for the Census. Chairwoman Johnson expressed the importance of counting all individuals in our area, district, and state.

Mr. Dorazio stated the Census Bureau is looking for workers for the 2020 Census. Jobs pay \$15/hour and \$0.58/mile, with preference given to Veterans and previous Census takers. Commissioner Ross asked how many people they were looking to hire. Mr. Dorazio stated they were looking to hire 5,000 people across the state, although it could vary. He played a quick one-minute promotional video regarding the 2020 Census.

Mr. Dorazio said he covers Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Gates, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell and Washington Counties, as well as being a backup for Hyde and Dare Counties. The goal of the Census is to count everyone once. He stated the Census is important, easy, and safe.

Mr. Dorazio stated the self-response rates in the 2010 census averaged 76% for the region. He stated the Governors goal for the 2020 census is at least 82% self-response rate in each county in the state.

Mr. Dorazio said the Census Bureau sends out 100 different surveys each year to a small randomly selected segment of the population. These surveys are much longer and more detailed than the Census.

Postcards will be mailed out in March alerting everyone to the upcoming Census and providing the kick-off to self-response. April 1st is Census day, the day all packets are mailed across the country. The Census consists of only 10 questions and can be filled out on a phone, tablet, over the phone or by paper form. Commissioner Ross asked about the accuracy of the Census and Commissioner Hoffer asked how secure it is to complete on your phone. Mr. Dorazio said the Census is accurate within 1% and it is secure to answer on a mobile device. If a self-response is not received by the end of April, Census takers will start going door-to-door in May and June. The final count is due to the President by December 31, 2020.

Mr. Dorazio spoke about the different ways the data will be used. He stated the more people that respond, the more federal funding we receive and the more political power we have. He spoke about Make NC Count, a state complete count commission, funded through the Governor's

office. According to them, there is about \$16 billion a year at stake in federal funding for NC based on the upcoming census. Every person that is missed in NC will cost about approximately \$2,000 a year in federal funding.

Mr. Dorazio said the Census Bureau is prohibited from sharing any information they collect. He spoke about the 72-year rule which allows some data to be released to the National Archives after 72 years for geological family research purposes.

Commissioner Earl Pugh stated Hyde County has approximately 5,600 residents according to the 2010 Census, which represented a 73% count. He wanted to know if that meant they have 1500 more people than the census says. Mr. Dorazio said that was just the self-response rate alone and referred them to the Census Quick facts on the Census Bureau's website, where you could look up the demographics for any county. Mr. Dorazio also shared tools on their website that counties can use to help spread the word on the Census.

Commissioner Ross asked why they only collect statistics on the Spanish or Latino ethnic groups. Mr. Dorazio said the question is required under the law by the Voting Rights Act.

c. 2020 Federal Assistance Application/Partnership Planning Grant Resolution (VOTE)

Executive Director Wilkins advised the Board that on Tuesday, October 15th we received notification from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to submit our application for the fiscal year 2020 federal assistance planning grant, which renews every 3 years. This will be a 3-year partnership planning and investment grant, in the amount of \$210,000, or \$70,000 a year from EDA. We currently have this grant; however it expires on December 31. This grant requires a non-federal match from the Commission of \$90,000 (30%), which has already been budgeted. The purpose of the EDA Planning Grant is to provide support to the planning organization for the development, implementation, vision, or replacement of the comprehensive economic development strategy (CREDS).

Commissioner Griffin motioned to move forward with the recommendation, seconded by Commissioner Davis, motion carried unanimously.

d. Consideration of the Revolving Loan Fund Program (RLF) (VOTE)

Executive Director Wilkins discussed terminating the RLF program. She presented the staff recommendation to the Board for full voluntary termination of the RLF program with agreement of the US EDA. Albemarle Commission will refund unused federal capital funds in an approximate amount of \$255,500 within 30 days. The funds are available to pay EDA. If the board approves termination, the capital portion of \$84,637 will be retained by the Commission. Of that portion, \$66,000 consists of active loans that are current. Upon termination of the RLF program, Albemarle Commission funds will no longer be under EDA rules and restrictions.

Commissioner Davis motioned to terminate the RLF Program, seconded by Commissioner Robert Kirby. There were eleven (11) Board Members in favor. Commissioner Griffin opposed. With majority in favor, the Motion carried.

Staff Reports

Commissioner Riggs asked the Board if they are suffering the same problem with DOT expending all their repair funds. Chairwoman Johnson mentioned the DOT is currently under a freeze.

Commissioner Hoffer said grass cutting had been stretched out between periods. Chairwoman Johnson stated the DOT is trying to figure out how much of their funds will be needed for the hurricanes and natural disasters.

Report of the Executive Director:

Executive Director Wilkins presented the Director's report. She advised the Board the IBX Passenger

Ferry meeting originally scheduled for October 21st had been rescheduled to November 18th from 10 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. at the Perquimans County Library. Executive Director Wilkins also spoke about the Governor's Hometown Strong event happening on October 28th and 29th in Tyrrell and Washington Counties. A call is scheduled on November 4th with Hillary Sherman, US EDA, regarding our CREDS. The Board was encouraged to attend the County Manager/Chair meeting on Tuesday, November 5th. A discussion will take place about changing the date so Tyrrell County representatives can attend in the future. The Board was reminded about the Holiday Gathering on November 21st at the Perquimans County Rec Center. There is a brief Board Meeting at 5:30 p.m., prior to the Holiday Gathering.

Commissioner Griffin asked if the meeting could be held at the Perquimans Rec Center. After a brief discussion, it was decided to hold the November board meeting at the Perquimans Rec Center.

Report of Committees

None.

Chairperson Comments:

None.

Board Member Comments:

Commissioner Pugh said Hyde County is slowly moving from demolition to rebuilding after Hurricane Dorian. Commissioner Griffin asked if a resolution needed to be sent to FEMA. Commissioner Pugh stated they were getting funds from the State.

Commissioner Griffin spoke about an engineering fail in the solar panels in Currituck. The Bureau of Ocean Energy Management awarded the second offshore wind contract off of Norfolk which would tie into island grids offshore winds off of Corolla and Corova. He also spoke to the Director of the Administrative Office of Oceans who told Commissioner Griffin this would create jobs; however, North Carolina wouldn't be the beneficiary. Commissioner Griffin stated Duke Energy signed a deal to start building and maintaining offshore wind facilities in Morehead City.

Commissioner Hofler of Gates County said they dedicated a Historic Mark to Thad Eure.

Commissioner Davis spoke about the closing of Tyrrell County's Prison and the impacts it will have on the county.

Closed Session:

Commissioner Riggs motioned to enter into closed session in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 143-318. (11) (1)(6) for a specific personnel matter, seconded by Commissioner Davis, motion carried unanimously. The Board and Attorney Leidy entered into closed session at 7:35 p.m.

Commissioner Hofler motioned to come out of closed session at 8:01pm, seconded by Commissioner Ross, motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.



Chairwoman of the Board
Tracey A. Johnson

11/21/2019

Date

Attested by:



Clerk to the Board, Ashley Stallings