

**Minutes of the
Albemarle Commission Board of
Delegates July 18, 2019
6:00PM**

Opening

Chairwoman Tracey A. Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Board Member Jordan Davis led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation

Board Member Robert Kirby led the Board in the Invocation.

Determination of Quorum

The presence of a quorum was determined by Clerk and Administrative Benefits Coordinator, Ashley Stallings, with twelve (12) Members present.

<u>Name</u>	<u>County</u>
Clayton Riggs	Camden
Sandra Duckwall	Camden
Robert Kirby	Chowan
Harriett DeHart	Chowan
Rob Ross	Dare
Linda Hofler	Gates
Earl Pugh	Hyde
Lloyd Griffin	Pasquotank
Fondella Leigh	Perquimans
Jordan Davis	Tyrrell
Tracey A. Johnson	Washington
Marion Gilbert	Ex Officio

Absent Members

Paul Beaumont	Currituck
Elizabeth White	Currituck
Howard Swain	Dare

Partners, staff, and guests present:

Attorney Hood Ellis of Hornthal, Riley, Ellis and Maland was present.

Staff members:

Melody Wilkins, Executive Director
Jeri Hansen, Finance Officer
Angela Welsh, RPO Director
Ashley Stallings, Administrative & Benefits Coordinator

Guests and Partners

Guest speaker Representative Bobby Hanig.

Agenda (VOTE):

Chairwoman Johnson amended the agenda by moving 6A to 7A, delete item 9B-Closed Session, stating that will occur next month. Board Member Lloyd Griffin made a Motion to amend the agenda as requested. His Motion was seconded by Fondella Leigh. With no further discussion, the Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment:

Chairwoman Johnson thanked Tim Hass and Jerry Jennings from NCDOT for coming in support. Chairwoman Johnson then introduced James H. Trogden, who was appointed Secretary of North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) in January 2017. Secretary Trogden has over 30 years of experience in Transportation. He started with the Department in 1985 as an Engineer. In 2000, he was made Division 4 Engineer. Secretary Trogden is also a retired Major General from active service in the National Guard. Chairwoman Johnson thanked him for his service and welcomed him to the Albemarle Commission.

Secretary Trogden provided an update on issues in our Region and around the State. He stated he was in Hertford to look at the S-Bridge. He asked the Board if there was anything that needs to be done or could be done better around the Region.

Secretary Trogden discussed his background briefly. He had 25 years with the DOT, started back in 2017 after 3 years in a private sector, he retired and came back. He spoke about it being a really busy time. He discussed how they have worked hard to improve their project delivery. He spoke of how NCDOT has successfully gone from dollars being accumulated waiting for projects to be ready to now having more projects ready than they have dollars to fund.

He discussed NCDOT being more successful and being more competitive with grants at the Federal level. He spoke about NCDOT receiving the Tiger Grant for \$19 million. He spoke of NCDOT receiving \$147 million in INFRA, newest Federal grant. That is for their first widening on I95 for 26 miles. He stated they are adding 300 miles of fiber optic network on the entire I95 corridor and from I95 to US70. They plan to work with a private sector on how to offer that to the private sector, so they can start connecting communities on their fiber.

He noted they had passed in the last session of the General Assembly the first NC Transportation Bonds that we have had since 1996 called "Build NC". NCDOT sold their first set in June along with Garvee Bonds. They received a wonderful interest rate on \$300 million, which gave them an additional bonus of \$58 million to be able to advance in construction. One of the projects is US158 in Northampton County. Reason why "Build NC" is important, they have had Garvee for a long time, that we can bond against future Federal Revenues but that primary impacts projects in the State wide Tier or towing projects. However, NCDOT didn't have anything to advance projects at the regional and division Tier level. "Build NC" is that tool. That is the only place NCDOT can use those bond funds to advance projects at those levels.

He mentioned in the last 6 months, he had been spending time on looking forward in the next decade. There are various projections that between 40% and 95% of all travel within the next 10 years will be autonomous, electric and shared vehicles. He explained, you might say that has significant impact on our economy of how we operate positively. The projections are the cost of logistics of delivering freight and moving people will be cut by two-thirds. However, almost all the sources we are saving money on are sources used to fund transportation today including motor fuels, driver's licenses and vehicle registration fees. He has appointed NC First Commission which considers future investments in transportation in this new reality. This will not only be automobiles but may also include autonomous drones delivering freight.

He provided an update on current projects in our area and spoke about the importance of I87 and associated costs. He spoke about the two interchanges that are in the program. One is at Harvey Point Road and the other is at New Hope Road. NCDOT is working to keep them funded and scheduled. He gave an update of the Mid-Currituck Bridge. Board Member Rob Ross asked Secretary Trogden who filed the lawsuit to stop the bridge? Secretary Trogden responded by stating Southern Environmental Law Center is the legal arm, although he was not sure of the plaintiff's name.

He spoke of the first passenger only ferry from Hattares to Ocracoke and how well this is going having

transported an approximate 20,000 people in two months.

He mentioned that we are currently entering Hurricane Season. He then asked the Board to share anything that could be made better.

Board Member Lloyd Griffin spoke about issues with storm water drainage and his concerns with I87.

Board Member Jordan Davis spoke about Tyrrell County's drainage issues and noted that roadside ditches are not being maintained.

Chairwoman Johnson spoke about drainage and flooding issues in Washington County. She also asked about the status of the Cherry Bridge in the Creswell area.

Board Member Robert Kirby asked Secretary Trogden when I87 would be complete. Secretary Trogden stated at this point he could not give a schedule. Secretary Trogden discussed the opportunity with the two interchanges in the next 10 years.

Representative Edward Goodwin spoke about the yellow signs on the Interstate west of I95 stating "Farm Equipment Uses This Highway". East of I95 the yellow signs read "Farm Equipment Used This Highway". He asked why they were different. Secretary Trogden stated he would find out and let him know.

Board Member Earl Pugh commented the passenger ferry and the trans system are more successful than anyone would have imagined.

Representative Goodwin spoke briefly about the ferries.

Board Member Lloyd Griffin asked Representative Goodwin and Hanig about the trawl nets, fishing and Spawn Bill. Representative Bobby Hanig responded by stating it will not move.

Representative Bobby Hanig:

Chairwoman Johnson introduced Representative Bobby Hanig and thanked him for coming to speak to the Board.

Representative Bobby Hanig discussed how he began as a Board Member on the Workforce Development Board and was asked to become the Chairperson on the Workforce Board. He was the Chairperson on the Workforce Board for four years. Then he became a Commissioner and now he is a Representative.

He spoke of how important the work that is done within the Albemarle Commission and how the programs are important to the Communities. He spoke of how committed he, Representative Goodwin and Senator Steinburg are to this region. They communicate and collaborate with each other for the good of Eastern NC. He stressed how we should think as a Region. He was surprised of the lack of communications between counties when he became a commissioner.

Board Member Lloyd Griffin spoke about the renewable energy amendments. One request that was sent off was trying to go from 20% to 40% on being able to tax these solar farms. He spoke of looking at the rate of return and the longevity on this. We are encouraging those to come here and it is impacting some of the land owners, however, there are some jobs that come with that. So, the economic developers in the state are not recruiting the companies that build the solar panels build the infrastructure. Therefore, we aren't getting that segment of the job market. They use the resources the county gets in taxes. We sent a House Bill 251 someone proposed and we sent up a similar type of resolution. There is no need to give our taxes away when we don't get any jobs for it. Representative Hanig responded as he would check into it to see where it settled, however, he didn't

think it moved.

Board Member Sandra Duckwall asked for more information on the passed bill to allow donations of unexpired Drugs. Representative Hanig explained currently under the state law pharmacies can donate prescription drugs to free clinics or whomever needs them. Currently they cannot be donated if they are 6-months from expiration. We have allowed them to be donated up until the day they are expired. Board Member Duckwall asked if that was any pharmacy, Representative Hanig responded that it is any pharmacy.

Board Member Jordan Davis asked about the status of Senate Bill 377, the Windmill Bill. Representative Hanig responding by stating it hasn't moved. It passed through the Senate, went to the House and the House is not in support. Board Member Jordan Davis discussed how important windmills would be to Tyrrell County. Chairperson Johnson spoke about this being important to Washington County as well.

Chairwoman Johnson thanked Representative Hanig for taking the time to come and speak to Albemarle Commission.

Ex Officio Marion Gilbert commended Representative Hanig for staying true to his word. And thanked both him and Representative Goodwin for their service.

Old Business:

Chairwoman Johnson discussed the recommendation of Committees from the previous Board Meeting. The only recommendation given was the creation of a Clearing House Committee by Board Member Lloyd Griffin.

Chairwoman Johnson asked Board Member Lloyd Griffin what he would like the makeup of the Clearing House Committee to consist of. Board Member Lloyd Griffin requested it to consist of three (3) people. He stated communication could be by email, conference call, or FaceTime whereby Executive Director Melody Wilkins could ask for guidance on newly proposed projects.

Chairwoman Johnson asked for volunteers for this committee. Board Member's Clayton Riggs, Lloyd Griffin and Chairwoman Johnson volunteered to be on the Clearing House Committee.

Board Member Rob Ross asked what the primary duties of this committee would be. Board Member Lloyd Griffin replied to help guide Director Wilkins how to proceed with outside requests she may receive.

Approval of June 2019 Minutes (VOTE):

Board Member Lloyd Griffin made the Motion to approve the Minutes as presented. His Motion was seconded by Board Member Linda Hofler. With no further discussion, the Motion carried unanimously.

New Business:

a. Safe Routes to School Grant Update

Director Angela Welsh reported that during March Albemarle Commission board meeting, the Board approved staff submitting application for a Safe Routes to School non infrastructure grant. She discussed how the grant is paid on reimbursement basis and is awarded for 3 years. A 20% match by Albemarle Commission is required and she stated that during the March board meeting, the Board voted to approve the submittal of the grant application with 20% of up to \$30,000 per year for 3 years as well as a \$20,000 annual administrative fee for the Albemarle Commission. The Finance Director, Executive Director and herself met to review it the recently received NCDOT agreement. She wanted to bring a couple of items to the Boards attention. For

the three years, Albemarle Commission is awarded \$357,596. The State reimbursement rate is 80% and the Albemarle Commission is responsible for 20%. That 20% equals \$71,519. During the Board Meeting in March, she reported the Board approved \$20,000 annual administrative fee. Which means if we use all the Federal funds for the project in the amount of \$357,596, the Albemarle Commission would be paying \$11,519 total for 3 years out of pocket for the grant which would not be eligible for reimbursement. The difference of \$11,519 is a result of the of \$71,519 match versus \$60,000 for 3 years' worth of administrative fees earned.

Board Member Earl Pugh stated he thought the Board passed it to get a 20% administrative fee not \$20,000 a year and it was 20% of the funds.

Board Member Rob Ross stated the difference is about \$4,000 a year and that was what the Board was discussing.

Board Member Lloyd Griffin suggested to get the recording listen to the recording and have a discussion at the next meeting.

After some discussion, Chairwoman Johnson stated to bring the recording to the next meeting for further discussion.

RPO Director Welsh also wanted to point out in the agreement, if the Albemarle Commission decided to terminate the project without approval from the DOT. Albemarle Commission would be responsible for reimbursing the NCDOT 100% of all cost they had occurred associated with this project within 60 days of receipt of an invoice.

b. Budget Resolution to Write Off Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) Delinquent Debt

Executive Director Wilkins discussed the proposed Resolution to write off an RLF delinquent loan in the amount \$37,060.10. Board Member Lloyd Griffin made a Motion to accept the Resolution as drafted. His Motion was seconded by Sandra Duckwall. With no further discussion, the Motion carried unanimously.

Staff Reports

RPO:

Board Member Clayton Riggs asked Director Welsh about the Transportation Authority facing a \$256,000 cut, ICPTA article. He asked if there was anything that the community could do to help with this. Director Welsh discussed ICPTA asked for letters of support from the RPO, which were sent. Board Member Clayton Riggs discussed his concerned about the funding cut and how it will affect the community that uses and need this transportation.

Chairwoman Johnson suggested as a Board they should draft something up to send to our representatives, as our Counties rely on this transportation.

Report of the Executive Director:

Executive Director Wilkins noted Albemarle Commissions financial audit will be done on September 11th and 12th. She mentioned all the department heads have been asked to be in the office in case of any questions. Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co PA will be conducting the Audit. She stated NWDB met Tuesday July 16th and elected their Chair and Vice Chair. Zach Bray was re-elected as Chair, and Philip Stovall was selected as Vice-Chair. She mentioned July 28th marks her 6-month anniversary with the Commission. Each Board Member was given an evaluation form with a postage marked envelope to complete and return prior to the August Board Meeting. Executive Director Wilkins gave an overhead presentation to the Board on the status of the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program. There was discussion between the Board and the Staff. Further consideration of the RLF will take place at the August Board Meeting.

Report of Committees

None

Chairperson Comments:

Chairwoman Johnson stated the Commissioners have a state wide conference in August. She would appreciate if the Board Members would come and give support, as she runs for the Second Vice President of that organization.

Board Member Comments:

Board Member Clayton Riggs stated Camden County is on schedule for the opening of their new waste water treatment plant at the end of July.

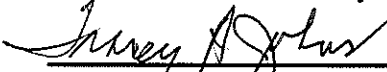
Board Member Robert Kirby mentioned the Edenton Steamers.

Board Member Lloyd Griffin stated Pasquotank County passed their budget.

Board Member Linda Hofler stated Gates County passed their budget and are preparing for an audit.

Adjournment

Chairwoman Johnson adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.



Chairwoman of the Board
Tracey A. Johnson

7/15/19
Date

Attested by:



Clerk to the Board Ashley Stallings