

**Minutes of the
Albemarle Commission Board of
Delegates May 16, 2019
6:00PM**

Opening

Vice-Chair Rob Ross (Acting Chairperson) called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Vice-Chair Rob Ross led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Invocation

Board Member Earl Pugh 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
Robert Kirby	Chowan
Harriett DeHart	Chowan
Elizabeth White	Currituck
Paul Beaumont	Currituck
Howard Swain	Dare
Rob Ross	Dare
Linda Hofler	Gates
Earl Pugh	Hyde
Lloyd Griffin	Pasquotank
Fondella Leigh	Perquimans
Jordan Davis	Tyrrell

Absent Members

Sandra Duckwall	Camden
Tracey A. Johnson	Washington
Marion Gilbert	Ex Officio

Partners, guests, and staff present:

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

Staff members:

Melody Wilkins, Executive Director
Carolyn LaDow, Finance Officer
Laura Alvarico, AAA Director
David Whitmer, NWDB Director
Cynthia Gossage, Admin. Technical & Financial Support Specialist
Ashley Stallings, Administrative & Benefits Coordinator

Guests and Partners

Guest speakers Jennifer Haynie and Francine Durso, NC Division of Water Infrastructure.

Agenda (VOTE):

Board Member Linda Hofler made a Motion to approve the agenda as presented. Her Motion was seconded by Board Member Fondella Leigh. With no further discussion, the Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of April 2019 Minutes (VOTE):

Board Member Fondella Leigh pointed out under Board Member Comments, language states "Board Member Wallace Nelson..". Wallace Nelson is an Alternate Member. The verbiage should be amended to read "Alternate Board Member Wallace Nelson..".

Board Member Earl Pugh made the Motion to approve the Minutes as amended. His Motion was seconded by Board Member Jordan Davis. With no further discussion, the Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comments:

None.

Old Business:

None.

New Business:

a. NC Division of Water Infrastructure Presentation

Executive Director Melody Wilkins introduced Jennifer Haynie, Supervisor of Environmental Special Projects and Francine Durso, Senior Project Manager with the NC Division of Water Infrastructure.

Francine Durso gave an overview of the role of Division of Water Infrastructure. She explained the Division receives State and Federal funding that is provided specifically for water systems, water treatment plants, sewer systems, and sewer system plants. The Division was established in 2013 by the General Assembly. A nine (9) Member Board was appointed to determine the State's water and sewer needs, the cost, and availability of funds to cover the needs.

The General Assembly requested the Division to determine the water and sewer needs in a dollar amount and where will the funds come from to pay for those needs. They were also requested to produce a master plan for those needs across the State. The estimated amount calculated for water and sewer needs was \$16-\$26 billion-dollars in the next 20 years. Vice-Chair Rob Ross asked how the Division reached the estimate. She responded the Division compiled Capital Improvement Plans (CIP) from as many utility providers possible to determine the average amount.

She noted the monies their Division receives is primarily Federal funds and may be distributed in the form of loans to local governments. Legislature provides grant money occasionally. The Division only funds a tiny portion of the water and sewer needs each year.

Jennifer Haynie discussed the funding programs and grants offered through the Division. She spoke about resources and training options for water and sewer. She advised NC School of Government offers training. Also discussed, Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project; which would be good resource to help with issues within the water and sewer system. She also mentioned that the NC Rural Water Association offers local governments a variety of training.

She stated Council of Governments (COGs) are a great resource and advised the Board of workshops they offer for Utility staff.

Application training would take place in the Fall, applications due by the end of September, training in July early August and funding announcements should go out in June.

b. Personnel Policy (VOTE)

Executive Director Wilkins plans to hold an Albemarle Commission Staff Meeting on June 12 to present the completed Personnel Policy. She has worked closely with Attorney John Leidy on revisions.

Board Member Clayton Riggs made a Motion to approve as presented. His Motion was seconded by Board Member Jordan Davis. Vice-Chair Rob Ross opened the floor for discussion. Board Member Lloyd Griffin asked about compensatory time of exempt and non-exempt employees. Attorney Leidy advised the Board asked to place a cap that states in no event may an employee accumulate more than 40 hours. Board Member Lloyd Griffin also asked about medical leave. Attorney Leidy stated it was discussed what compensatory time could be used for. FLSA discussion was related to the way compensatory time is used when it is earned in lieu of overtime which is controlled by FLSA and regulations of the Department of Labor. Albemarle Commission has the right to control the use any way the Commission chooses. Board Member Elizabeth White asked about language regarding potential complaints against the Executive Director on page 50/64 of the Personnel Policy and whether it mirrors the Grievance Policy. Attorney Leidy advised the language was intentional. As it reads, it leaves the Board the discretion whether to follow the Grievance Policy or implement another procedure. He also stated this leaves a broad discretion on how the Board decides to address given the fact of being against the Director. Board Member Elizabeth White asked if the rules would apply on page 53/67. Attorney Leidy stated the rules are not mandated they may apply if the Board decided but not required to use that process. Board Member Lloyd Griffin asked Executive Director Wilkins and the Board to consider creating an Ethics Policy. Attorney Leidy noted this could be added as a policy. Board Member Lloyd Griffin also inquired about the Conflict of Interest Policy Addendum. Executive Director Wilkins stated the Personnel Policy includes the Conflict of Interest Policy and all new employees sign a statement of receipt. With no further discussion, the Motion carried unanimously.

c. Proposed Health and Safety Manual (VOTE)

Executive Director Wilkins presented the proposed Health and Safety Manual noting the Health and Safety Committee consists of Ashley Stallings, Angela Welsh and Emily Nicholson. Board Member Harriet DeHart pointed out a few typos to be corrected on page 77 and 78.

Board Member Jordan Davis made a Motion to approve the Health and Safety Manual as presented. His Motion was seconded by Board Member Earl Pugh. With no further discussion, the Motion carried unanimously.

d. NWDB Request for Job Reclassification (VOTE)

NWDB Director David Whitmer discussed his request for a job reclassification. He noted prior to February 2019, the Albemarle Commission and NWDB shared a Finance Officer. NWDB finance responsibilities fall under with NWDB staff within the position of Administrative Technical & Financial Support Specialist. NWDB has revised the job description to make finance the major part of that position with some duties removed. A similar position in Aging Department has a salary grade of 21; therefore, he recommends the same pay grade.

Board Member Lloyd Griffin made the Motion to approve the change of position classification and title. The Motion was seconded by Board Member Linda Hofler. With no further discussion, the Motion carried unanimously.

e. 2019-2020 Budget Discussion

Executive Director Wilkins presented the proposed 2019-2020 Budget. A few things were updated per the Board's request such as providing additional explanations on changes and percentages. She stated this will be the budget formally presented to the Board on June 20th if

no other changes are needed. There is no increase to member dues with this budget. The required Public Hearing is scheduled at this meeting. It was posted in two local newspapers, on the Albemarle Commission's website, and Member Governments were notified via email on April 30th.

AAA Director Laura Alvarico and NWDB David Whitmer were present for any questions the Board may have regarding the proposed budget.

Board Member Lloyd Griffin made a Motion to call for the Public Hearing. His Motion was seconded by Vice-Chair Rob Ross. With no further discussion, the Motion carried unanimously.

No persons were present at the Public Hearing.

Board Member Clayton Riggs made a Motion to close the Public Hearing. His Motion was seconded by Board Member Paul Beaumont. With no further discussion, the Motion carried unanimously.

Vice-Chair Rob Ross opened the floor for discussion. He asked Director Whitmer for an explanation of carry forward increases. Director Whitmer explained NWDB differs from most agencies in that annual allocations have a life of 2 years. Any monies not spent in the first year of those allocations, NWDB is able to carry forward to spend in the second year. He explained this is a good thing. NWDB does not receive all of their allocations until October/November. If NWDB spent all of the money by June 30, there wouldn't be any money to pay bills. The law builds in the flexibility for the Workforce Boards to continue their services and be responsive to the needs of the community.

Vice-Chair Rob Ross asked why the Federal revenues decreased by \$57,000 for Workforce Development Adult. Director Whitmer explained there are formulas that are applied every year which changes allocations.

Board Member Robert Kirby stated last meeting he asked for a report showing how many people we were serving prior and how many now. Director Whitmer was asked to explain why NWDB was asking for 2 additional Career Advisors. He explained these are not actually 2 new positions. These positions were in the budget prior to last year. Prior to last year NWDB had two Career Advisor south of the sound in Hyde, Tyrrell and Washington. NWDB lost one of the Career Advisor last year. NWDB decided to try one Career Advisor; however, it was not working. Due to this the numbers of training, enrollments have been cut in half. In Elizabeth City, one of the Career Advisors was promoted to Program Manager and the vacant position was not filled right away. He would now like to have another Career Advisor placed in the Elizabeth City Career Center.

Board Member Robert Kirby expressed his concerns of the 2019-2020 budget being 10% more than the current budget. The drivers of this for NWDB are the unemployment rate to a large degree. He is seeing the unemployment rates are going down in the counties we serve. He is wondering if there is a need to increase by 10%. Director Whitmer explains there is a need for this increase. He stated unemployment is down but those who are in the Career Centers are the ones who need our help. He added that increasing NWDB's budget brings more federal dollars into the local community.

Board Member Linda Hofler discussed although we have lower unemployment rates, there are some people in the community that do not have the skills to obtain a job. NWDB helps those people maintain jobs. Board Member Clayton Riggs discussed NWDB still would need to spend man hours to help people regardless of education, skill or substance abuse. Director Whitmer stated substance abuse as a barrier to employment is something NWDB has started considering.

Board Member Earl Pugh stated Hyde County has the highest unemployment rate in the state.

Board Member Jordan Davis discussed the Federal Government is going to give money to someone and wouldn't the Board rather the money come to us to help our communities.

Board Member Lloyd Griffin discussed NWDB not only works in the Career Centers, but also with the local Community Colleges with the re-training programs helping people in the community

complete Certificate Programs.

Board Member Elizabeth White asked about generating cumulative results of a KPI from the previous year and the coming year for the budget. She believes it would make the budget simpler to translate the increases and decreases across the board.

Board Member Clayton Riggs asked about the 10% increase on page 110. Finance Officer Carolyn LaDow explained this is now funded at 100% vs 50% as the year prior. Finance Officer LaDow stated it's a shifting in funds as the Albemarle Commission's Finance Officer is now paid at 100% from indirect funds. He also asked about support staff going up 80%, she advised this is also a shifting of funds.

Vice-Chair Ross expressed how the percentage changes could be misleading. He asked if the future budgets could show dollar amounts of changes vs percentages.

Vice-Chair Ross began discussing Aging-Nutrition-Home Delivered Meals on page 118. He asked about the line item for Grants that increased by 400%. Last year the budget was \$20,000, for the 2020 budget it has increased to \$100,000. Aging Director Laura Alvarico noted last year she reported AAA received a 3-year grant from BCBS for all tier 1 counties in our 10-county area. She explained after the current year we will receive \$80,000 from BCBS for the next two years for grant funding.

Vice-Chair Rob Ross asked about the Home Community Care Block Grant on page 124. Funding went down from the Federal Revenues; however, the State Revenues increased. Director Alvarico explained similar to NWDB, Aging's 16 funding sources utilize a different interstate funding formula at the Federal level. This changes every year based on population and poverty level in older Adults. Last year, the State increased the Home and Community Care Block Grant match by \$1 million; which increased our State allocation.

Board Member Paul Beaumont pointed out a typo on page 118 for line item "Meals", to correct the comment to "increased meal costs".

Board Member Robert Kirby asked for a yearly report during April's Board Meeting for the Aging Department. Director Alvarico produced a report showing the information requested on April 30 which was then emailed to all Board members. She noted Aging currently has a waiting list needing Aging's services. She explained like NWDB; Aging welcomes the increase because Aging currently isn't able to meet the demand. Board Member Robert Kirby asked if the limitation was money. Director Alvarico stated money is one limitation, however, for meals the limitation currently is available volunteers to serve those meals in certain counties.

Board Member Paul Beaumont asked about line item on page 136 under NWDB for special projects, \$35,000 one-time event. Director Whitmer explained NWDB hosts an annual Workforce appreciation day between the three Boards. Main driver for Governor Cooper's Workforce budget is local innovation. Director Whitmer requested to set some monies aside to develop and implement. Board Member Paul Beaumont requested a more descriptive description of the events. Finance Officer LaDow stated on page 106 has further explanation of the events will be. Staff Member Cynthia Gossage discussed the line item will not be new money. In prior years, the activities were spread out throughout the budget. With the expenses being captured under one-line item, NWDB would know exactly what their expenses and cost were.

Vice-Chair Rob Ross asked the staff to help them as board members by clearly explaining proposed year-to-year changes. Board Member Howard Swain stated most of the questions being asked are asking for explanations of what is written but not understood. The more information the better.

f. Public Hearing Proposed Budget

Public Hearing was held during 2019-2020 Budget Discussion.

Staff Reports

Vice-Chair Rob Ross opened the floor to the Staff.

AAA:

Director Alvarico updated the Board on a couple events Aging has upcoming. She discussed a workshop for Opioid Use Among Older Adults on May 29th in Elizabeth City. She also discussed the Elder Abuse Awareness Day Walk on May 31st in Elizabeth City. She noted 187 participants had registered for the walk. Board Member Fondella Leigh asked Director Alvarico about the increase in the Meals for Perquimans. Director Alvarico expressed Capitan Bob's is the driving force in the increase.

RPO:

Executive Director Wilkins noted the Safe Routes to School grant was awarded on May 13th; contingent on some state recommended changes. Albemarle Commission is one of 10 selected out of 11 applicants. The grant was approved at 80% cost reimbursement with the AC matching 20% and adding a 20% administrative fee. More information is to come once clarification from the State is received.

NWDB:

Vice-Chair Ross asked Director Whitmer about the count table in his report. He asked how we are serving such a high number of people with the unemployment rates so low. Director Whitmer discussed how there are still a lot of people out of work and people wanting better jobs.

Director Whitmer announced Hyde County has earned their ACT Work Ready Certification. This is a national certification. Hyde is the fourth county to earn this. NWDB Staff worked very hard with staff at Beaufort Community College and other partners to make this happen. He also pointed out NWDB has started the Work Local Campaign with the Enchantment Grant. A pilot project has begun in Edenton with Albemarle Boats, Colony Tire and Regulator Maine. NWDB will be identifying staff in these businesses that grew up and live local. They are taking pictures of the staff at their work and finding a little bit about them. Posters are being placed in the local schools to educate students that they don't have to leave our region to find good careers. NWDB hopes to replicate this throughout our region.

Report of the Executive Director:

Executive Director Wilkins discussed the upcoming 2020 Census Workshop being held on May 23rd. She encouraged the Board to send anyone from their county that would benefit from this workshop. She informed the Board Senator Bob Steinburg would be attending the Board Meeting in June. Hometown Strong will visit Gates, Perquimans and Chowan Counties on May 20th-21st. She also discussed a proposed Resolution for Strengthening Critical Drainage and Water Quality Infrastructure.

Report of Committees

None.

Chairperson Comments:

Board Member Comments:

Board Member Clayton Riggs reported Camden is about 90% complete with their budget. The new waste water treatment plant is scheduled to open July 1. South Mills waste water treatment plant was upgraded.

Board Member Robert Kirby stated it was good timing to have the ladies with the Water Infrastructure here. A local startup boat builder received a \$500,000 from the State. They build \$12.5 million Catamarans. The grant had a slight match from the county and town with the condition to create 50 new jobs for 2 years.

Board Member Lloyd Griffin spoke about grants. He questioned whether Albemarle Commission is paid to administer these grants? In his opinion, when looking at other grants and funding, Commission needs to make sure we receive administrative fees prior to accepting grants. Grants consume time from Staff to manage these grants. He asked Vice-Chair Rob Ross to discuss some sort of direction with grants at the next Board Meeting. He suggested a policy for administering and accepting grants. Executive Director Wilkins was asked to draft a policy or policy statement for administering and accepting grants. Board Member Elizabeth White volunteered to assist Executive Director Wilkins in producing this document.

Board Member Fondella Leigh reported all is well in Perquimans County.

Board Member Linda Holfer reported all is well in Gates County.

Board Member Jordan Davis discussed green energy. He spoke of Bill 377 Senator Brown had passed and the negative impact this will have on Tyrrell County.

Board Member Howard Swain reported all is well in Dare County.

Board Member Earl Pugh reported the passenger ferry, a leased ferry, arrived in Ocracoke.

Vice-Chair Rob Ross reminded all that May is Older American's Month. He spoke about a Resolution about this at Dare County's next Board Meeting.

Adjournment


Vice-Chair Rob Ross asked for a Motion to adjourn. Board Member Paul Beaumont made the Motion to adjourn. His Motion was seconded by Board Member Robert Kirby. Meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.



Acting Chairperson of the Board,
Rob Ross

7/18/19
Date

Attested by:


Clerk to the Board Ashley Stallings