

THE ANSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS convened for their regular monthly meeting on Monday, August 1, 2017 beginning at 6:00 P.M. in the Board Room, Suite 209, of the Anson County Government Center.

Commissioners present: Anna Baucom, Chair
Ross Streater, Vice Chair
Vancine Sturdivant
Jim Sims
Jarvis Woodburn

Commissioners absent: Harold Smith
Bobby Sikes

Staff members present: Andrew Wilkison, Interim County Manager
Denise Cannon, Clerk to the Board
Cary Garner, Finance Officer

Other: Scott Forbes, County Attorney

Chairman Baucom called the meeting to **Order**, welcoming all who were present. Chairman Baucom asked Interim County Manager Wilkison to deliver the **Invocation**.

Approval of the Agenda by Commissioners:

Chairman Baucom added an appearance by Finance Officer Cary Garner, closed session added by Commissioner Sturdivant, and two Commissioner's concerns added by Commissioner Sims. Vice-Chair Streater moved to approve the agenda with the addition of the appearance, closed session and commissioner concerns, Commissioner Sturdivant seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Appearances:

Cary Garner, Finance Officer presented a Resolution Approving Financing Terms for two (2) replacement ambulances and one (1) quick response vehicle, for Anson County EMS, totaling \$540,765.28. Commissioner Sturdivant made a motion to approve, Commissioner Woodburn seconded, motion carried unanimously. Vice-Chair Streater made a motion for Chairman Baucom to endorse the Resolution Approving Finance, Commissioner Sturdivant seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Finance Officer Garner presented a request from Anson County Schools requesting an estimated \$53,993.90, from the Public Schools Capital Outlay Reserve to assist with electrical issues at the Anson Middle School and Anson High School. Commissioner Woodburn made a motion to approve the request, Commissioner Sturdivant seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Finance Officer Garner presented the property tax releases/refunds/adjustments for the July month end, totaling 1,733.55. Vice-Chair Streater made a motion to approve, Commissioner Sims seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Public Addresses:

Gretchen McCollum shared her concerns and issues with the Anson County Animal Shelter. Ms. McCollum stated she was a volunteer rescue coordinator and have driven 30,000 miles in the last year transporting animals. Ms. McCollum shared her views and opinion on a puppy named Shayla, in which she believes was unnecessarily killed at the Anson County Animal Shelter. Ms. McCollum feels that as a society we have failed the animals. Ms. McCollum stated that she feels that the animal advocates and rescuers did everything they could to save Shayla, stating that they asked for at-home quarantine and quarantine at a licensed veterinarian office with a certified rabies quarantine room, with no expense to the County, Ms. McCollum stated that they all were denied. Ms. McCollum feels that laws and procedures need to change, in which they should protect the innocent, and not be left to the discretion of any one person. Ms. McCollum stated that they do not want to fight against the County, they want to fight beside the County, and Anson County has the unique opportunity to be in the forefront of change for animal welfare.

Lindsay Biggers shared her concerns and issues with the Anson County Animal Shelter. Ms. Biggers shared that she was a volunteer rescue coordinator for the Anson County Animal Shelter, along with Ms. McCollum coordinating with various rescue organizations in the United States to facilitate pulling animals from our shelter. Ms. Biggers explained animal rescue and how vitally important it is to the County shelter. Ms. Biggers noted that in the last twelve (12) months, 386 dogs have gone to various rescue organizations. Ms. McCollum compared that to 144 dogs that were adopted by the public, noting that in the last 3 weeks since Shayla was killed, 43 dogs have been pulled for rescue organizations as compared to 2 dogs that were adopted. Ms. Biggers stated that Anson County cannot adopt its way out of its unwanted pet population. Ms. Biggers stated that it has been said that rescue only wants the “good dogs” but actually, they take heartworm positive dogs, the dogs with embedded collars, ones with gunshot wounds, ones that with missing limbs, and puppies with parvo, all of which would have been euthanized without rescue. Ms. Biggers stated that recently they have been told that they are not allowed to go into building 2, which houses most of the animals at the shelter. Ms. Biggers feels this has a negative impact on the amount of information that can be given to any interested rescue group and in most cases means a rescuer won’t be willing to take that animal. Ms. Biggers further explained they are no longer allowed to have pictures or information made available electronically, noting that because a lot of rescuers are not in North Carolina, they would need a digital picture along with all available information concerning the animal. Ms. Biggers stated they their goal is to move as many animals to safety as possible and to do this as fast as possible, which in the long run saves the shelter and the county money in food, shelter, medical services, and supplies.

Chris Sanford shared his concerns and issues with the Anson County Animal Shelter, noting that he appeared before the Board eighteen (18) months ago to shed light on the issues at the animal shelter. There, he and his wife were asked to serve in an advisory capacity along with Chairman Baucom and former County Manager Megan Garner, to try and help bridge some of the issues concerning the animal shelter. Mr. Sanford stated that the committee only met twice, due to unreturned emails and phone calls by the former County Manager Garner, who felt like it was her prerogative to do things her way. Mr. Sanford shared that the audience consists of all different types of rescuers, fosters, volunteers, etc. that have intervened for animals that don’t make it to the shelter. Mr. Sanford asked the Board to take in consideration of the comments, recommendations, and suggestions presented before the Board.

Robin Sanford shared her concerns and issues with the Anson County Animal Shelter. Ms. Sanford feels the circumstances leading up to the euthanization of the puppy Shayla was one of the most blatant violations of public trust and policies that she has ever witnessed living in this County for thirty years. Ms. Sanford feels that the County staff put one set of rules before the public and drastically weakened them behind closed doors with complete disregard for the citizens for the voiceless animals living in this County. Ms. Sanford feels the purpose of her voice tonight is to make officials aware of the willingness of the citizens to volunteer and participate in the efforts to develop a shelter operation with a solid foundation, abiding by the State laws, regulations, protocols regarding animal welfare, rabies control and quarantine, and shelter management. Ms. Sanford recommended that on August 11, 2017, the Shelter Advisory Committee meet and begin a long overdue dialogue and establish a real foundation of trust. Ms. Sanford shared that she was an Anson County liaison for Brother Wolf, noting that they have offered to do a shelter and policies procedures audit and provide a full written assessment to the County Commissioners, at no cost to the citizens. Ms. Sanford asked the Board for a motion to accept this offer. Commissioner Woodburn made a motion to appoint Vice-Chair Streater to the Shelter Advisory Committee, replacing former County Manager Megan Garner. Commissioner Sims seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Jim McGonical shared his concerns and issues with the Anson County Animal Shelter. Mr. McGonical feels the animal shelter needs to operate with transparency and full disclosure. Mr. McGonical feels that nothing should be done without policy and procedures, and if you have them they need to be followed. Mr. McGonical stated that when the state report came back, there were inconsistencies amongst the County, County Manager, and County Attorney. Mr. McGonical wonders if the problem going to be fixed. Mr. McGonical offered a copy of Chesterfield's policy and procedures.

The Shelter Advisory Committee is set to meet Tuesday, August 15, 2017, at 3:00 pm.

Lleana Kistler, intake coordinator for Greater Charlotte SPCA, shared her concerns and issues with the Anson County Animal Shelter. Ms. Kistler feels that Shayla's death was preventable and unnecessary. Ms. Kistler feels that after the ten (10) day quarantine, an animal would show signs of rabies, if they have it. Ms. Kistler noted that Shayla was euthanized on day 6, with no evidence or exhibition of any rabies symptoms. Ms. Kistler shared that she tried to get in contact with County Manager Megan Garner, with no results. Ms. Kistler feels that communication needs to improve and feels that there is a lack of remorse and no ownership.

Glo Kearing shared her concerns and issues with the Anson County Animal Shelter. Ms. Kearing feels that she does not understand the lack of remorse and apologies from anybody that is guilty in this situation. Ms. Kearing feels that County Manager Megan Garner has clearly broken the law, citing the Department of Agriculture. Ms. Kearing says she does not understand why former County Manager Garner is not being held accountable and not being prosecuted, citing that Union County has had some officials misuse their authority as well.

*Attorney Forbes made it clear that in his opinion no laws were broken.

Marvin Deese voiced his opposition to the countywide zoning. Mr. Deese feels that the tax rate on farmland is cheap compared to a residential property. Mr. Deese feels the County can get more tax base out of residential property than a hundred acres of farmland. Mr. Deese stated that he is in opposition of countywide zoning.

Old Business:

Countywide Zoning:

No action taken

Manager's Report:

Interim County Manager Wilkison shared with the Board that the County has successfully completed its first payroll with the new software program, Paylocity, recognizing Cary Garner, Beth Dunn, and Chris Joffson. Interim County Manager Wilkison reminded the Board of Congressman Pittenger's Town Hall

meeting, scheduled for August 30, 2017 at 10:00 am, in the Commissioners' Board Room.

Chairman's Report:

Chairman Baucom shared that the Community Assistance Visit will be on August 8, 2017, at 2 pm, with the County Inspector Keith Gaskins at his Office. Chairman Baucom also shared that several members of the Board are planning to attend the 2017 NCACC (North Carolina Association of County Commissioners) Conference in Durham, NC, August 10 – 12.

Consent Agenda:

Commissioner Woodburn moved to approve the Consent Agenda as follows: Board Minutes, seconded by Commissioner Sims, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Concerns:

Commissioner Sims shared that the Landscaping at the old hospital site on Morven Road needs improvement. Commissioner Sims also shared his concerns about the staffing at the airport, noting that the airport is very valuable and in acreage is worth approximately 4.4 million dollars and of substantial positive economic impact. Commissioner Sims shared with the Board that the FAA visited the airport, and several items and equipment were not properly working. Commissioner Sims recommended that the airport have a full time position and part time position, which will be on-call and paid per call, making sure that both are adequately trained.

*Chairman Baucom called for a meeting break.

Reconvened: Commissioners reconvened and went into a closed session.

Closed Session:

Motion by Commissioner Sturdivant, seconded by Commissioner Streater, to go into closed session for Personnel pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(6). Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Commissioner Sims, seconded by Commissioner Woodburn to come out of closed session, motion carried unanimously.

In regular session, Commissioner Woodburn made a motion that during the interim period of recruiting a new County Manager that the Board appoint Vice-Chair Streater to oversee and have full authorization of the Anson County Animal Shelter operations, noting that the Board is giving Vice-Chair Streater complete authority as an individual to make decisions concerning the Anson County Animal Shelter, seconded by Commissioner Sturdivant. Motion carried unanimously.

Vice-Chair Streater accepted this appointment voluntarily with no additional pay. Commissioner Woodburn stated that there needs to be an official notification of Vice-Chair Streater appointment to all staff, employees, and citizens.

Commissioner Woodburn made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Sims, motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Denise Cannon
Clerk to the Board