

Cleveland County Board of Commissioners
April 5, 2016:

The Cleveland County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session on Tuesday, April 5th at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission Chamber of the Cleveland County Administrative Office.

PRESENT: Jason Falls, Chairman
Eddie Holbrook, Vice-Chair
Susan Allen, Commissioner
Ronnie Hawkins, Commissioner
Johnny Hutchins, Commissioner
Jeff Richardson, County Manager
Tim Moore, County Attorney
Andrea Leslie-Fite, Assistant County Attorney
Henry Earle, Clerk to the Board
Kerri Melton, Community Services Director
Brian Epley, Finance Director
Allison Mauney, Human Resources Director
Chris Green, Tax Administrator
Kristin Reese, Economic Development Director
Perry Davis, Emergency Management Director
Joe Lord, Emergency Medical Services Director
Bill McCarter, Planning Director

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jason Falls called the meeting to order and Commissioner Johnny Hutchins led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance and provided the invocation for the meeting.

AGENDA ADOPTION

ACTION: Commissioner Hutchins made the motion to adopt the agenda, as presented by the Clerk. It was seconded by Commissioner Hawkins and unanimously adopted by the Board.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION

PROCLAMATION FOR NATIONAL COUNTY GOVERNMENT MONTH: Commissioner Falls stated that April is National County Government Month and that he was glad that this year's theme is "Safe and Secure Counties." He called on County Clerk Henry Earle to read the proclamation.

02-2016

**PROCLAMATION HONORING NATIONAL GOVERNMENT MONTH
SAFE AND SECURE COUNTIES**

WHEREAS, the nation's 3,069 counties serving more than 300 million Americans provide essential services to create healthy, safe, vibrant and economically resilient communities; and,

WHEREAS, Cleveland County Government takes pride in its responsibility to protect and enhance the health, well-being and safety of our 97,000 residents in efficient and cost-effective ways; and,

WHEREAS, the National Association of Counties' "Safe and Secure Counties" Initiative is encouraging local governments to focus on strengthening the safety and security of their communities; and,

WHEREAS, in 2015, Cleveland County 911 Communications responded to over 131,000 calls, EMS responded to over 21,000 calls and made over 9,000 transports, and the Sheriff's Office responded to over 61,000 calls for service; and

WHEREAS, Cleveland County is extremely fortunate to have such strong public safety departments that go above and beyond to ensure that Cleveland County is secure and that citizens feel as though they are protected;

NOW THEREFORE, the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners, do hereby proclaim April 2016 as National County Government Month and encourage all citizens to celebrate the tireless efforts of our public safety officials as they strive to keep Cleveland County "Safe and Secure."

Proclaimed this, the 5th day of April, 2016.

After the proclamation was read Chairman Falls invited Public Safety employees Perry Davis, Joe Lord, Stori McIntyre and several Volunteer Fire Department chiefs up to the front and they took a picture with the Commissioners.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

EARL SCRUGGS CENTER UPDATE: Chairman Falls called Emily Epley, Director of the Earl Scruggs Center, to the podium. It had been a year since the last update from the Earl Scruggs Center and a lot has happened. The number of visitors was steady from year 1 to year 2. The Center had visitors from 48 states and 13 countries, all the way to New Zealand. Mrs. Epley spoke about free Wednesdays at the Center and the discounts that are given to various groups. She mentioned the new Don Sturkey photography exhibit as well as the upcoming Music of the Military and Grand ole Opry exhibits that were coming soon. Ms. Epley mentioned the Play it Forward program where individuals can check out instruments and even receive lessons as well as the Adopt a Bus program allowing classroom field trip sponsorship for Cleveland County students. New hours will begin at the Earl Scruggs Center on June 28th. They will be Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. extending to 6:00 p.m. on Wednesdays. Commissioners thanked Ms. Epley for the work her staff and volunteers do.

CITIZEN RECOGNITION

- Deb Hardin: Ms. Hardin came as a representative of Clifford's Army, an animal rescue in Cleveland County. Clifford's Army is an animal rescue but they have also assisted with spays and neuters for those who cannot afford it and their current fund raising efforts were to put vests on the K-9's at the Sheriff's Office. On Saturday, April 9th Clifford's Army is having a fund raiser at the fairgrounds to help raise money for this current effort.
- Robert Williams: Mr. Williams complimented the proclamation and its focus on public safety, stating he had witnessed firsthand the professionalism and hard work of public safety with recent events in Fallston. He stated he wished he could say the same for the rest of county government. Mr. Williams spoke about the previous incentive agreement for KSM Castings and that the County had set up a big event at the Legrand Center with the governor and the speaker of the house present, along with the company itself. It was obvious that the Commissioners had already decided they were going to approve the incentive agreement and that the event at the Legrand Center was nothing more than a publicity stunt a few days before the primary. Mr. Williams stated that he was afraid that the same thing was going to happen later with the incentive agreement that was on the agenda later in the evening and that Commissioners were not following the proper procedure for handling incentive agreements because this company has already been announced.

CONSENT AGENDA

ACTION: Commissioner Hawkins made the motion, seconded by Commissioner Holbrook, and unanimously adopted by the Board, to approve the following items:

MINUTES: There being no corrections, additions or deletions, the Minutes of the March 15th, 2016 regular meeting were presented and approved as written.

LANDFILL: BNA #057

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Department/Account Name</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
054.474.4.350.00	STATE GOV. GRANTS	\$9,425.00	
054.474.5.350.00	REPAIRS ON EQUIPMENT	\$2,653.00	
054.474.5.470.00	GARBAGE EXPENSE	\$6,772.00	

Explanation of Revisions: Budget funds received from the State for the Electronics Management Program (E-Waste).

LIBRARY: BNA #058

<u>Account Number</u>	<u>Department/Account Name</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
010.611.4.409.00	LOCAL REVENUES	\$17,298.00	
010.611.5.340.00	MAINT BLDG/GROUNDS	\$17,298.00	

Explanation of Revisions: Budget donations received to go towards the purchase of new carpet for the library.

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

INCENTIVE AGREEMENT FOR UNIQUETEX: Commissioner Falls called Kristin Reese, Economic Development Executive Director, to the podium. Mrs. Reese stated that Mr. Williams was correct in stating that this company had already been announced and their name is Uniquetex. Governor McCrory gave \$800,000 from his One North Carolina discretionary fund. Uniquetex is a global leader in nonwoven textiles for a variety of business needs. This is the first Chinese company in Cleveland County. Uniquetex is going to create 150 new jobs, adding \$31 million in taxable investment and an average wage of \$36,000. The grant is for 8 years at 60% of taxes paid back to them for a total of \$858,000. Mrs. Reese thanked the Commissioners for their support of economic development. The public hearing was then opened at 6:36.

- Robert Williams: Mr. Williams thanked Mrs. Reese for pointing out the governor giving money to the project. He then stated that the population of Cleveland County is going down. We have 25,000 people in Cleveland County that are on food stamps and that represents about \$3 million per month in assistance. Mr. Williams said he read the executive summary for Project Cube (Uniquetex) and there is no mention of food stamp recipients or how to remedy that situation in it. Mr. Williams stated that the Commissioners need to think about more than just the tax base for the good of Cleveland County. He then recommended that the Commissioners vote no on the economic development project until these processes are thought about in detail.

The public hearing was closed at 6:41.

ACTION: Commissioner Hawkins moved that the incentive agreement be approved as written. It was seconded by Commissioner Holbrook and unanimously approved by the Board.

SCREENING ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: Chairman Falls called Mr. Martin to the podium. Mr. Martin talked about the proposed amendment to the screening ordinance. The recommended change was that the

screening ordinance would require evergreen trees that are 6 feet at the time of planting and are staggered in planting every 10 feet. The public hearing was opened at 6:48 and closed at 6:49 when no one came to speak.

ACTION: Commissioner Holbrook moved approve the Screening Ordinance amendment be approved as presented. It was seconded by Commissioner Allen and unanimously approved by the Board.

REGULAR AGENDA

SOLAR FARM ORDINANCE AMENDMENT: County Zoning Administrator Chris Martin presented an amendment for the Solar Farm ordinance that was originally presented on March 1st. The amendments include Type A screening, which had just been amended to include evergreen trees only, and setbacks of 50 feet from property lines as well as 100 feet from dwellings. Third is a decommissioning plan requiring signatures from the land owner and operator of the solar farm which instructs them to decommission the solar farm after 12 months of not generating any power.

Chairman Falls opened up the floor even though the public hearing for this item had happened on March 1st. Hearing no comment, Chairman Falls closed the floor for comment. Commissioner Holbrook thanked the planning department for their work and for being sensitive to public comment and input. Commissioner Hutchins thinks the setback and screening requirements will go a long way in ensuring that future projects will be positive for all involved. Commissioner Allen commended the planning department for their work and for working with citizens.

ACTION: Commissioner Hawkins moved to approve the amendment as presented. It was seconded by Commissioner Holbrook and unanimously approved by the Board.

VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC PLAN PRESENTATION: Perry Davis, Emergency Management Director, came to the podium and reminded Commissioners that, in December of 2015, they had commissioned him to begin the process of strategic planning for volunteer fire departments. Mr. Davis then introduced the volunteer fire chiefs that were present as well as Greg Grayson from the Department of Insurance. Mr. Grayson thanked the Commissioners for their progressive vision. Mr. Grayson provided some key observations for the Commissioners from the report:

- More funding will be needed to maintain current level of service delivery
- Opportunities exist to further unify the service delivery system
- Volunteer Fire Departments are at an important crossroads where salaries and hiring employees may become a necessity because volunteerism is dropping.

Mr. Grayson also gave policy and operational recommendations:

- Update contracts to specify desired level of service
- Address reversion of capital assets in the event of future dissolution
- Determine balance between fire district funds and county general funds

- Strengthen the role of the Cleveland County Rural Fire Commission to include reviewing the expansion of large fire apparatus, construction of new fire stations, and continuously evaluating class 10 areas.
- Determine the path that the county desires to take with providing career firefighters, especially during weekday hours.
- Consider group purchase opportunities, more fire hydrants across the county, recruitment and retention and volunteer stipends.

Commissioner Hawkins asked if there had been any effort to identify water lines and fire hydrants and where they need to be placed. Mr. Davis said there were maps that were accessible on GIS.

Commissioner Hawkins asked if they knew how many hydrants were needed and Mr. Davis said that would require more study. Commissioner Holbrook said the biggest challenge was to ensure that the report was acted upon and not forgotten. Commissioner Holbrook asked that Mr. Davis work with the County Manager to set up a list of short, medium and long range goals and Commissioner Hutchins suggested to take it a step farther and to attach dates to those goals. Commissioner Falls stated that once that is in place a strategic plan for fire departments can be put into place.

COMMISSIONER REPORTS

Commissioner Hawkins: Thanked the employees for wearing their badges and reminded everyone about the health department's Open House on Sunday, April 10th at 2:00 p.m. at the Public Health Center.

Commissioner Allen: Mentioned that the Assistant Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Commerce had come to visit the Retail Task Force and to share with them all of the resource available to those who want to start new businesses.

Commissioner Hutchins: Attended the NCACC Board of Directors meeting and the federal government had given NC DSS a bad grade which could lead to a reduction in funding. Although Cleveland County's DSS received high marks it is a state average and some of the bigger counties are pulling the average down. Regionalization of Mental Health is happening in North Carolina as well. April 19th is the gun range opening and everyone is invited to attend the event.

Commissioner Holbrook: Mr. Williams was correct in his comments regarding the number of people on food stamps. Commissioners are aware of the number and do not take it lightly. We hope to address it through economic development and through workforce training.

County Manager Richardson: Mr. Richardson thanked Department Heads, specifically IT director Marty Gold, Electronic Maintenance Director Mark Dellinger and Building Inspections Director Paul Ezell for the work they did to ensure that the health department was up and running in time for the grand opening.

Chairman Falls: Sound the Alarm was last Friday to raise awareness about the 200+ children in foster care in Cleveland County. The big fundraiser for Clifford's Army Animal Rescue is Saturday, April 9th from 10-6 at the Fairground.

ADJOURN

Chairman Falls entertained a motion to adjourn. The motion was made by Commissioner Hawkins, seconded by Commissioner Hutchins and unanimously approved by the Board. The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners will be Tuesday, April 19th at 6:00 in the Commissioner's Chamber.