

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further comments or business to discuss, the Regular Meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m. on motion made by Joseph W. Hoffler, seconded by Alan Lennon.

Wallace E. Nelson, Chairman

Clerk to the Board

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WORK SESSION
March 16, 2020
7:00 p.m.

The Perquimans County Board of Commissioners Regular Work Session scheduled for Monday, March 16, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. has been **cancelled**.

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EMERGENCY CALLED MEETING
March 17, 2020
7:00 p.m.

The Perquimans County Board of Commissioners met in an Emergency Called Meeting on Tuesday, March 17, 2020, at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Room located on the first floor of the Perquimans County Courthouse Annex.

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| MEMBERS PRESENT: | Wallace E. Nelson, Chairman | Fondella A. Leigh, Vice Chair |
| | Joseph W. Hoffler | T. Kyle Jones |
| | Alan Lennon | Charles Woodard |
| MEMBERS ABSENT: | None | |
| OTHERS PRESENT: | Frank Heath, County Manager | Mary Hunnicutt, Clerk to the Board |

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Nelson. Commissioner Woodard gave the invocation and the Chairman led the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA

Chairman Nelson stated that a copy of the Agenda was at their seats tonight. Charles Woodard made a motion to approve the Agenda. The motion was seconded by Alan Lennon and unanimously approved by the Board.

DISCUSSION OF CORONAVIRUS

Chairman Nelson explained the purpose of this Emergency Called Meeting was to discuss the outbreak of the Coronavirus through the United States and the entire world. A meeting of the Perquimans County Emergency Management Control Group met yesterday. The following individuals attended the meeting:

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| Earline Brown, Mayor of Hertford | Pam Hurdle, Hertford Town Manager |
| Fred Yates, Mayor of Winfall | Ken Rominger, Vice Mayor of Winfall |
| Jonathan Nixon, Emergency Services Director | Julie Solesbee, Emergency Management Public Information Office |
| Ashley Stoop, Albemarle Regional Health Services (ARHS) | Frank Heath, County Manager |
| Wallace Nelson, Chairman Board of Commissioners | |

This group has been keeping in touch with each other to discuss how to proceed with the spread of the Coronavirus. Chairman Nelson asked the following individuals to update the Board on how they are handling their offices and services during this pandemic:

- **Ashley Stoop, ARHS**, presented updated information on the coronavirus and what is happening with up-to-date conditions.
- **Senior Center**: The Chairman recognized County Manager Heath who explained that the purpose of the County is to focus on eliminating the exposure of large groups. The County has taken some actions to mitigate those situations. Earlier, the Governor presented an Order on March 10th to close the schools until March 27th and he will let Tanya Turner, School Superintendent, discuss this. He also included a prohibition of mass gatherings over a 100 people. Today, there was another Order that restaurants and bars would be closed for dine-in but allowed take out and drive thru. Also, yesterday they met with Mayor Yates, Mayor Brown, Health Department, and Emergency Services which was a very productive meeting. They had good discussions on how to work together to respond and get information out. Items were placed on our social media posts and reverse 911 calls to our citizens. The Pettigrew Library System has closed all their libraries for the next two weeks. At the Senior Center level which is the most vulnerable population, we have decided that we would go ahead and cancel things like exercise class, Zumba, and congregate meals are being offered as a to go option only. Based on the fact that they are the most vulnerable population, he is asking Board's direction to close the center until the end of the month. He asked the Board to give him some direction as to what to do after that. Based on a couple of health experts, we are asking that the seniors stay home since they are in that group that is most affected by this virus. Their biggest concern is that the individuals are able to get the meals that they usually receive. They have Beverly Gregory, Senior Center Coordinator, and Laura Alvarico, Albemarle Commission Area Agency on Aging, present tonight to further explain their plans. He then asked them to step forward to present their plan of action.
 - **Beverly Gregory, Senior Center Coordinator**: Ms. Gregory said that Ms. Alvarico had already thought about this before the question arose. The people that were coming into the center for congregate meals have been given the option of curbside service. The people that were coming in via transportation and can no longer obtain that transportation have been placed on the Meals on Wheels Routes and possibly have someone to pick up a meal for one of those individuals. She believes for the safety of those individuals so she feels that closing the center was the best thing to do.
 - **Laura Alvarico, Albemarle Commission**: Ms. Alvarico stated that as of today all the Senior Centers in the area have closed to the General Public but Perquimans County which the decision will be made tonight. They have many Meals on Wheels volunteers that are in this same vulnerable population so that she is concerned that they will have a mass exodus of volunteers and they are receiving new requests for Meals on Wheels. Their concern is the chance for malnutrition of clients rather than getting the virus. They are doing everything that they can to keep this program moving forward. County Manager Heath said that he appreciated everything that

Ms. Gregory and Ms. Alvarico are doing for the senior population and, should they need volunteers to run the routes, he would do what he could to get volunteers to help.

- County Manager Heath asked for a consensus from the Board as to the direction they wish Mr. Heath to take regarding the Senior Center. Alan Lennon made a motion to close the Senior Center to the end of the month. Charles Woodard seconded the motion which was unanimously approved by the Board. Mr. Heath further asked the Board if they would extend the discretion to extend that date after discussion with Chairman should that be necessary. Commissioners Lennon and Woodard agreed to Mr. Heath's request.
- **Recreation Department:** Mr. Heath explained that the Recreation Department is another department that has large group meetings. Practices have been cancelled. We have shut down all recreational activities in anticipation of the meeting tonight. He also recommends closing down public activities at the center and delays the start of any games until after end of the month. He also asked the Board to give him the discretion to extend this date after talking to the Chairman as needed. Fondella A. Leigh made a motion to approve Mr. Heath's recommendation. The motion was seconded by Charles Woodard. The motion was unanimously approved.
- **Water Department:** It has been decided that we will delay water cut-offs for a couple of weeks because people focus on handwashing and sanitary conditions so that was just an internal decision that they made today.
- **Extension Office:** The Extension Office has cancelled their activities for the next couple of weeks but they will continue to work with the SHIIP Program related to Medicare.
- **Intercounty Transportation Authority:** As Ms. Gregory alluded to earlier, the Intercounty Transportation Authority has postponed their service until further notice except for dialysis or critical care cancer patients.
- **School System:** Mr. Heath mentioned that he and Tanya Turner had a conference call yesterday morning with Steve Lane of Inteliport, Martha Nixon, and April Benton to discuss the things that we could do to extend WIFI to the residents of Perquimans County so that the children would be able to do their lessons that are being prepared for them. He discussed the various locations for use of WIFI within Hertford. They are also trying to talk to local churches to see if they could use their WIFI during this time in their communities.
- **Control Group (listed above):** Mr. Heath explained that this group is the decision-making group during emergency events. This group will meet tomorrow at 3:30 p.m. at the Emergency Operations Center at the EMS Building to continue to discuss response to the coronavirus and to discuss the possibility of declaring a State of Emergency for the County, the Town of Hertford, and the Town of Winfall. Mr. Heath has a draft tonight that he will share with the Town Mayors and staff to see if it meets their needs. Many of the surrounding counties have already adopted the State of Emergency Declaration. The Albemarle Regional Health Services recommends that Perquimans County, Hertford, and Winfall adopt this Resolution declaring a state of emergency. This is an information tool and a possible tool for reimbursement for expenses incurred during this emergency situation from the Federal Level of Government. They also discussed how information is provided to the residents of the County and Towns. This information has been placed on the County's Website, the County's Facebook Page, the Emergency Services Facebook Page, and through the Code Red Reverse 911 Call System. Mr. Heath turned the meeting back over to the Chairman.

Mayor Earline Brown asked Mr. Nelson if the Housing Authority Director could be made part of the Control Group. Mr. Heath explained that we have another group under the Control Group called the Support Group. This is the group that she would fall under.

Chairman Nelson stated that Jonathan Nixon, Emergency Services Director/Emergency Management Coordinator, has been sending out a large number of e-mails regarding the situation. He has also been in contact with the Health Department and the Hospitals to keep abreast of the situation around us. He asked Mr. Nixon to make a few comments.

- **Jonathan Nixon, Emergency Services Director/Emergency Management Coordinator:** Mr. Nixon explained that they have been monitoring this situation since January 31 2020. He also explained that the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was opened this morning at 8:00 a.m. and will remain open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with monitoring throughout the night. Control Group Meeting is scheduled for tomorrow at 3:30 p.m. The Emergency Medical Services Systems have updated their protocols per the NC Office of EMS for handling these types of cases. From the 911 Center, it is also included in that guidance because emergency medical dispatch is a function of EMS and so their questions that they asking will be the same as EMS questions. They are continuing to add to that system. For citizens that request EMS or Law Enforcement Assistance, they are asking that the people meet EMS or Law Enforcement outside their residence so we do not put the responders into the resident's home. The Hertford Police Department is working on answering their calls via phone and take reports over the phone. The Sheriff's Department is also handling calls and is monitoring the situation. Brian Center, Hertford Manor, and DaVita Dialysis have all taken preventive measures including no visitors except under life ending or hospice cases. They are also taking temperatures on staff as they enter the facility and are approving visitors as they enter. Emergency Services partnered with Coastal Carolina Family Practice and Albemarle Village to establish safety procedures for their buildings

County Manager Heath asked Chairman Nelson to notify the Commissioners that all the other County Departments are operating their business as usual but we are encouraging the public to handle their business via phone or internet. Mr. Nelson asked Tanya Turner, Superintendent of Schools, if she had anything to add tonight.

- **Tanya Turner, Perquimans County School Superintendent:** Ms. Turner restated that the Governor has closed the schools through March 30th. Right now, all their work days are optional through next Friday because the Governor has asked that the school staff prepare for a marathon not a sprint. When the staff left on Friday, they were under the impression that they would stay open through Monday. Things changed over the weekend and the schools were closed. The school is now charged with feeding the children and educating the children. They have met with many obstacles. Some students have internet service and others do not. Some students have the capability to come to the WIFI spots and some will not. The staff is trying to provide paper learning packets as well as on-line resources for our students. If the students can access the internet, then they will proceed with their work. Those that do not have access to internet service will be given the opportunity each week to pick up their paper learning packets at the schools. The teachers are working frantically to get at least eight weeks of these packets prepared. They are trying to get it done over the next two weeks because of the uncertainty of if and when the schools will close completely. Tomorrow, they will begin the feeding of the students at two hubs that will continue to stay open: Hertford Grammar School and Perquimans Central School. They will serve breakfast from 7:30 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. and lunch from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for all children in Perquimans County from ages 0 through 18 years of age. If by chance that an out-of-county child is in daycare at a home of a resident of Perquimans County, they are going to try to feed that child also. On Thursday, they will be rolling out buses to deliver meals to eight other sites throughout the County (Snug Harbor & Holiday Island Clubhouses, Wynne Fork Court & Meads Trailer Park, New Hope Methodist and Longview Estates Trailer Park, Saunders Grove and UpRiver Friends Church). This information will go out to the students beginning tomorrow night. The State has said that our salaried employees will continue to get paid but their hourly wage people will not get paid unless they work. They are trying to do everything that they can do to employ those hourly wage people. The bus drivers have been contacted to see if they are willing to work with the delivery of these meals. As of today, 18 of those bus drivers have agreed to work. They will be driving the buses, sanitizing the buses, and assisting with delivering these meals. The Child Nutrition Workers have to work to provide these meals. The custodians will clean and sanitize the building on a daily basis.

Chairman Nelson asked Susan Chaney, Social Services Director, if she had anything to add to what their department is doing:

- **Susan Chaney, Social Services Director:** Ms. Chaney informed the Board that the Social Services Department has implemented these safety measures. They are looking at the need to wash their hands often and thoroughly. They have been asked to handle their business via telework. She is keeping track of how many people actually come into the center. They have set up a drop box in the foyer with a statement that says, if you are sick, please do not come into the building but drop your paperwork in the drop box. Go back to your car and call us and they will have their person talk to them. The boxes are checked several hours a day. Keeping everything clean as much as possible. Most training throughout the state has been cancelled. Child protective services have to go on. They have to keep in touch with the foster care children. That is now being handled via phone calls. She discussed the situations with the nursing and rest home monitoring. Food & Nutrition are asking if they have emergency food stamps. They have extended their six to twelve months depending on cases. They are looking for waivers for hot foods. Looking into having supplements for their children out of school. Other policies are becoming a little more flexible. Currently they are in some federal audits. Once these current cases have been completed, they will be suspending the audits but no time given as to when they will begin again. More direction from the State will be coming in the next day or two.

Chairman Nelson asked if Mayor Earnell Brown or Mayor Fred Yates had any comments to make. Mr. Yates stated that they have implemented what the Control Group talked about yesterday. Ms. Brown gave a synopsis of how they are sterilizing their facilities. Pam Hurdle, Town Manager, said that they had been notified by the NC DMV that they will need to monitor the number of people in the building. If they get more than they are allowed, they will be asked to leave their paperwork, return to their cars and wait for our call. She said that they did not experience that today. They are proceeding with training of their employees on how to handle sterilization of their work space, etc.

Chairman Nelson asked the Board if they had any questions. He further stated that if they have any questions or needs any assistance, please let County Manager Heath or himself and they will try to assist you in any way. Commissioner Woodard complimented Julie Solesbee for her one call last night.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further comments or business to discuss, the Regular Meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m. on motion made by Joseph W. Hoffler, seconded by Charles Woodard.

Wallace E. Nelson, Chairman

Clerk to the Board

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