



CURRITUCK COUNTY NORTH CAROLINA

March 30, 2020

Minutes – Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners

WORK SESSION

1. 5:00 PM County Response to Covid-19/General Topics

The Board of Commissioners held a work session at 5:00 PM in a Special Meeting to discuss the county's response to the Covid-19 virus. The work session was held in the Board Meeting Room of the Historic Courthouse, 153 Courthouse Road, Currituck, North Carolina. In addition to Covid-19 related matters, general topics of importance were also planned for discussion.

Chairman White opened the meeting and announced that, due to public access limitations in place during the Covid-19 pandemic, the session was being live streamed and televised.

Currituck County Sheriff, Matt Beickert, began with a review of law enforcement response and departmental activities for enforcing protocols established in the county's emergency declaration and responded to questions posed by Commissioners related to marine patrols, checkpoints at county lines, essential workforce, and enforcement of gathering limitations. Sheriff Beickert said citizens have been complying with the measures in place.

County Manager, Ben Stikeleather, provided information to the Board related to procedural and policy changes for the county's internal operations and staffing. He reported on the Families First Coronavirus Act which changes provisions in the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to include measures to address those affected by Covid-19. Mr. Stikeleather discussed non-resident property owner and visitor access restrictions in Currituck County and the Outer Banks and relayed concerns over limited healthcare resources. He and Commissioner McCord discussed business entry permits and reviewed who is able to pass through checkpoints. Commissioner McCord reviewed law enforcement activities related to boater checks and said the Governor's order would allow residents to recreate on the beach. Commissioners and staff discussed directives in the Governor's Order related to mass gatherings and reporting of violations.

Potential dates for reopening were discussed, and the Board set a target date of April 30, 2020. The Board received guidance from County Attorney, Ike McRee, on remote participation in meetings. Mr. McRee provided suggestions for the Board to consider should they decide to hold a remote meeting, and he reviewed language revising the county code of ordinances to allow remote participation under a state of emergency. Following discussion, the Board chose to include additional discussion on an ordinance amendment at the 6:00 PM meeting following the work session. County staff and Commissioners held general discussion on Covid-19 restrictions, safety protocols and public information resources for citizens and businesses.

6:00 CALL TO ORDER

The Currituck County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Meeting at 6:00 PM in the Historic Courthouse Board Meeting Room, 153 Courthouse Road, Currituck, North Carolina. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss, consider or take action necessary in response to federal or state declarations regarding the Covid-19 pandemic and any other matters that may be discussed, considered or acted upon at a regular meeting.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Bob White	Chairman	Present	
Mike H. Payment	Vice Chairman	Present	
Paul M. Beaumont	Commissioner	Present	
J. Owen Etheridge	Commissioner	Present	
Mary "Kitty" Etheridge	Commissioner	Present	
Selina S. Jarvis	Commissioner	Present	
Kevin E. McCord	Commissioner	Present	

Chairman White called the meeting to order. Commissioner Paul Beaumont gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

A. Approval of Agenda

Chairman White requested amendments to the agenda. The Commissioner's Report was moved to follow the County Manager's Report and Consideration of an Amendment to the Code of Ordinances to Allow for Virtual Meetings was added as a New Business item.

Commissioner Mary Etheridge made a motion for approval. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCord. The motion carried and the agenda was approved as amended.

Approved agenda:

Work Session

5:00 PM County Response to Covid-19/General Topics

6:00 Call to Order

A) Approval of Agenda

County Manager's Report-Amended

Commissioner's Report

New Business

- 1) **Amended Item-Ordinance Amending Section 2-56 to the County Code of Ordinances to Provide for Remote**

Participation at a Meeting During a State of Emergency**Adjourn****Motion to Adjourn Meeting**

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Mary "Kitty" Etheridge, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kevin E. McCord, Commissioner
AYES:	Bob White, Chairman, Mike H. Payment, Vice Chairman, Paul M. Beaumont, Commissioner, J. Owen Etheridge, Commissioner, Mary "Kitty" Etheridge, Commissioner, Selina S. Jarvis, Commissioner, Kevin E. McCord, Commissioner

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT-AMENDED

In response to the Covid-19 virus pandemic, Ben Stikeleather, County Manager, asked the Board to consider cancelling all county events through April 30, 2020, except for the free drive through rabies clinic, to coincide with the County's tentative reopening date. The Board agreed to cancel events through April 30, 2020. Mr. Stikeleather reviewed procedural, staffing and operational recommendations for county departments and employees. Mr. Stikeleather responded to questions from Board members related to county construction projects and clarified items regarding staff employment and use of sick leave.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Chairman White said access to beach properties for owners wanting to act as an owner-contractor to prepare homes for the rental season would not be permitted at this time except in an emergency. He reported the County's tentative reopening date of April 30, 2020 and said it would be reviewed at the next Board of Commissioners meeting. He encouraged people to visit the County website for up-to-date information. Chairman White reviewed the horse fencing project at the off-road ramp. He acknowledged the many emails received from non-resident property owners. He asked for patience, described the reasons behind the county's decision to restrict access, and discussed enforcement efforts.

Commissioner Mary Etheridge offered her thanks to first responders, volunteers, business owners and employees for all of their efforts during this time. She asked the public to stay safe and be patient as the county adjusts to scheduling changes.

Commissioner Payment said the Board is doing their best to make good decisions regarding the current situation. He thanked everyone for their efforts and encouraged support of local businesses. He questioned if Waste Management had plans to change operations at county convenience sites due to Covid-19, and Mr. Stikeleather said no changes have been reported.

Commissioner Beaumont acknowledged county staff and fellow Board members for their efforts. He noted the Wright Memorial Bridge closure by Dare County and highlighted the need to build the mid-Currituck Bridge. He recognized troops deployed overseas and asked they be kept in everyone's prayers.

Commissioner McCord encouraged people to review the Governor's order on-line. He reported on who is able and what type of documentation is needed to access the Outer Banks. He acknowledged the telecommunications staff and provided Currituck County's dispatch contact number if citizens need to call. He talked about trash pickup on the roadways.

Commissioner Jarvis acknowledged the turbulent times and encouraged people to get their information from legitimate sources and not to react to posts on social media. She discussed the current challenges with socializing and alternative ways for people to support each other. She acknowledged a recent event where teachers drove through many neighborhoods in the county to reach out to students. She thanked the county staff and acknowledged those who worked to provide goods and supplies and who volunteered to assist various organizations.

Commissioner J. Owen Etheridge agreed with prior comments. He discussed the empty shelves at the grocery stores and encouraged citizens to check on their neighbors. He addressed the seriousness of the current situation, expressed optimism that we would get through it, and asked for prayers.

Chairman White reminded everyone that the beaches in Corolla and Carova are open but asked that people be responsible and follow safety and social distancing guidelines. Closures of public restrooms and playgrounds were reported.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Amended Item-Ordinance Amending Section 2-56 to the County Code of Ordinances to Provide for Remote Participation at a Meeting During a State of Emergency

County Attorney, Ike McRee, reviewed the current ordinance prohibiting the Board of Commissioners and Advisory Board members from participating in meetings remotely. Mr. McRee said the changes being considered would revise these provisions to allow for remote participation in meetings by Board members during a State of Emergency. Additional considerations pertaining to open meetings law were presented, and Mr. McRee suggested remote meetings be held only in limited circumstances.

Mr. McRee and County Manager, Ben Stikeleather, responded to questions and discussed remote meeting capabilities, computer security, and what business items are likely to be considered at a remote meeting. Mr. Stikeleather recommended against holding public hearings.

Following discussion, Commissioner Beaumont moved to approve the ordinance amendment with added verbiage to include if a physical quorum cannot be met after a survey of attendees by the County Manager and under a State of Emergency. The motion was seconded by Commissioner McCord. The second was withdrawn and the original motion was amended by Commissioner Beaumont to add the motion is applicable to Part 1 of the ordinance amendment as presented, applicable only to the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner McCord seconded the motion. The motion carried.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CURRITUCK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AMENDING SECTION 2-56 OF THE CURRITUCK COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES TO PROVIDE FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION AT A MEETING DURING A STATE OF EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. §153A-71 a board of commissioners may adopt its own rules of procedure in keeping with the size and nature of the board and in the spirit of generally accepted principles of parliamentary procedure; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. §153A-76 a board of commissioners may change the composition and manner of selection of boards, commissions, and agencies, and

may generally organize and reorganize the county government in order to promote orderly and efficient administration of county affairs.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners for the County of Currituck, North Carolina as follows:

PART I. Section 2-56(c) of the Code of Ordinances, Currituck County, North Carolina is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 2-56. Regular and special meetings.

(c) *Meeting attendance.* A board member must be physically present at a regular or special meeting to participate or vote in the meeting except during a state of emergency declared under Chapter 166A of the General Statutes of North Carolina when a majority of the board is unable to be physically present at the meeting.

PART II. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

PART III. This ordinance is effective immediately upon adoption.

ADOPTED this 30th day of March, 2020.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Paul M. Beaumont, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Kevin E. McCord, Commissioner
AYES:	Bob White, Chairman, Mike H. Payment, Vice Chairman, Paul M. Beaumont, Commissioner, J. Owen Etheridge, Commissioner, Mary "Kitty" Etheridge, Commissioner, Selina S. Jarvis, Commissioner, Kevin E. McCord, Commissioner

ADJOURN

The Board had no further business and Commissioner Beaumont moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Payment. The motion carried and the Special Meeting of the Board of Commissioners adjourned.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Paul M. Beaumont, Commissioner
SECONDER:	Mike H. Payment, Vice Chairman
AYES:	Bob White, Chairman, Mike H. Payment, Vice Chairman, Paul M. Beaumont, Commissioner, J. Owen Etheridge, Commissioner, Mary "Kitty" Etheridge, Commissioner, Selina S. Jarvis, Commissioner, Kevin E. McCord, Commissioner

1
2 APPROVED AS TO FORM:
3

4 _____
5 Donald I. McRee, Jr.
6 County Attorney
7

8 Date adopted: _____
9

10 Motion to adopt by Commissioner _____

11 Second by Commissioner _____

12 Vote: _____ AYES _____ NAYS
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