

**PITT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA
OCTOBER 12, 1999**

EMERGENCY CALLED MEETING

The Pitt County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session meeting on Tuesday, October 12, 1999, at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners' Auditorium, Pitt County Office Building, Greenville, North Carolina with the following commissioners present:

Eugene James, Chairman
Jeffrey E. Savage, Vice Chairman
Glenn Bowen, Commissioner
Charles P. Gaskins, Commissioner
David Hammond, Commissioner
Thomas H. Johnson, Commissioner
M. Theresa Shank, Commissioner
Beth B. Ward, Commissioner

Absent:

Mark W. Owens, Jr., Commissioner (excused)

Also present were:

Thomas B. Robinson, County Manager
JoAnne Burgdorff, County Attorney
Susan J. Banks, Clerk to the Board
Arlen Holt, PIO and Cable Coordinator
John K. Bulow, Assistant Manager
Melonie T. Bryan, Director of Financial Services

Call to Order and welcome by Chairman James.

Prayer by Commissioner Ward.

Pledge led by Commissioner Bowen.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Robinson stated that Commissioner Owens had called and asked to be excused from tonight's meeting.

UPON MOTION by Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Hammond, the Board voted unanimously to excuse Commissioner Owens from this meeting.

Vice Chairman Savage asked to have a report on the expenses incurred by the County at this point on response to Hurricane Floyd. Mr. Robinson said he would provide the report on Monday. Vice Chairman Savage then called for the question.

UPON MOTION by Commissioner Shank, seconded by Commissioner Bowen, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda.

REPORTS ON HURRICANE FLOYD

Mr. Robinson called on Bobby Joyner, Emergency Management Coordinator, report on the efforts being made to date by the County and other involved agencies.

Mr. Joyner reported that as of October 11, 1999; 8,394 applications have been received for FEMA help; 4,010 calls were received on the hotlines; and 6,147 individuals have registered for assistance through the FEMA housing program. He informed the Board that on Monday he started holding briefing session every afternoon at 4:00 p.m. with the involved agencies to discuss activities and needs assessments. These sessions have been very beneficial. They are now working on housing and debris removal. The State Emergency Response Team representatives, Jimmy Ramsey and Jeff Cardwell, will be leaving Wednesday morning. However, Mr. Joyner did state that the State Emergency Management will provide personnel to be assigned to Pitt County for supervision or management of the temporary housing sites.

Vice Chairman Savage asked about the role the 911 Communications Office played during this emergency. Mr. Joyner stated that they were very busy but carried on as close to routine as possible. They routed calls through the hotlines when necessary. Mr. Robinson informed the Board that the dispatchers are now medically trained and the Hospital also provided doctors to be stationed in the 911 center for assistance.

Chairman James expressed his appreciation for Mr. Joyner's report.

Mr. Joyner stated that Glenn Woodard from FEMA said that they would be providing more workers. They are giving temporary housing assistance first. Chairman James reiterated that the individuals need to call the FEMA phone number and then also apply for the SBA loan for assistance. He said FEMA representatives will look at the houses and determine if it can be lived in. They will provide at the most \$10,000 but in general are giving around \$1,500. He said if you qualify for those loans, they will loan you money at a reduced interest rate. He said there are individual and family grants for people with low income. He said the maximum funding is \$13,600 most people are receiving far less. He said that there needs to be major assistance from the State and Federal governments. Mr. Robinson stated that the government should look to take care of their own people, since they will take care of people in other countries.

There are Legislators that are meeting tomorrow morning. Mr. Robinson said that Pitt County has asked to be raised in tier of request so they can qualify for more assistance. He said he would bring forward a program for the Legislature and US Congress.

Temporary Housing - Eddy Davis

Mr. David reported on the three efforts being undertaken:

1. Travel Trailer Parks - Two sites with one east of Grifton, CSD site - 41 trailers on site, 32 trailers presently occupied and only three have electric current. Others are using battery power. CP&L will finish supplying power to the remainder of the road by the end of the week.
2. County Home Road site- 26 travel trailers on site connected with 10 more expected tomorrow. Sewer hook up will be in on Thursday. There will be more set up by the leasing people on Thursday.
3. Individual Sites
 - set people up on their site (property) as they repair or rebuild
 - 30 travel trailers on sites with a lot more to come
 - getting weekly updates from FEMA, with immediate status from inspectors
 - FEMA purchasing travel trailers from dealers and from various manufacturers

Additional issues involved are as follows:

- Security needed on sites. Probation/Parole officers are currently providing security. National Guard will assist after this weekend.

- Transportation is an issue for individuals in trailer sites. PATS buses/vans will be stationed at each site with scheduled times.
- Phone Company - providing one pay phone per ten units starting with the Grifton site. Phone company will not install individual service. It is very important that these people call FEMA and keep in constant contact and provide FEMA with any changes that they make to their residency.

Mr. Robinson said that FEMA representatives need to know how to reach people who are not able to live in their residences by them placing a sign on their house stating where they can be contacted. Commissioner Hammond said that there is plenty of misinformation getting out which is creating a problem.

Mr. Davis continued to report that the mail service will be done in Grifton personally and on an individual basis. At the County Home site, the mail service will set up a cluster box with numerous boxes like they provide for apartment complexes. The streets have been named and people have individual addresses.

Vice Chairman Savage asked about recreation for these communities. Mr. Davis stated that FEMA will provide those services once the residents and the situation has stabilized.

- Mobile Home Sites Report by Eddy Davis
- Temporary Housing Mobile Homes are fourteen by seventy feet single wide mobile homes with three bedrooms and two baths.
- Four sites for mobile homes
 - Holland Avenue outside Grifton
 - Stanley Farms Subdivision off Briley Road (100 -300 homes)
 Both are under negotiation with State and property owners.
- East Carolina University site - students on Dickinson Avenue
- Lewis Property behind Peaden's Grill - started construction, initial grading last week (50 units initially)

Both properties are under negotiation.

Governor's Hurricane Floyd Relief Fund

Mr. Robinson said that a check for \$728,000 was presented to him by the Governor on Friday evening and the County was directed to have the Department of Social Services Director be responsible for setting up a committee to oversee disbursement of the funds.

Mr. Ed Garrison, Social Services Director, reported that the Governor has worked hard to provide funding for the counties and that according to the information Pitt County was the most damaged of the 33 counties. As of October 5, 1999, 7,876 households had registered with FEMA as damaged. Pitt County was awarded \$727,965 by the Governor from the Governor's Hurricane Floyd Relief Fund and it was hand delivered last Friday. He said the Governor was very emphatic that the money get into the people's hands as soon as possible within a two week timeframe. Mr. Garrison assured the Board that he would operate the program the way the Governor intended it to be handled.

Mr. Garrison asked that the Board approve the budget amendment for these funds so they can be put into action. He said that he asked the United Way to appoint an unmet needs committee using the list recommended by the Governor. He stated that some mistakes were made on the appointments to this committee but it will be corrected with the next amount of money received which is supposed to be received next Friday. Mr. Garrison informed the Board that his staff will be taking applications for the funds Wednesday through Saturday from 10:00

a.m. until 9:00 p.m. at the Agricultural Building and the Rescue Squad building in Grifton. He said they will make an attempt to verify that the people live in Pitt County and that they were involved in the flood damage, however, they will not be doing the usual amount of verification. He said the people will never have their lives go back to what they were before Hurricane Floyd and that this will not help as much as is needed. He also noted that this funding will not be directed to any special groups.

Committee has proposed that all people can apply and verification of eligibility will be done within the time period allowed. Following the verification, the amount of funds will be divided evenly among the eligible applicants. The intent is to help as many people as possible even if its a small amount.

Commissioner Bowen read statements from the Governor's instructions that said that this funding is meant for individuals who could not receive assistance from other sources.

Mr. John Bulow stated that he had called the Governor's Office and that was not their intent. Vice Chairman Savage said that the people are getting stressed because they are standing in these lines to apply for funding and then are told that the funding has run out. He said that the middle class is being left out of these resources. Mr. Bulow said he had asked Ms. Owen, with the State, if this money could be used for categories of people and she said it was not meant to be used that way. It was for individual assistance. Farmers and small business owners may apply for the funding, as well as, any other citizen.

Commissioner Hammond expressed his concern about the makeup of the committee making this recommendation. He said that people outside of Greenville need to be represented, not just the agencies. Mr. Garrison said that he would not disagree and the committee would be done differently if more funding is forwarded to Pitt County. Mr. Garrison said he asked the United Way director to appoint the committee. Commissioner Ward noted that everyone on the Governor's list was represented on the committee. She further stated that this was a very short timeframe and the committee found an equitable distribution of this money. Commissioner Shank agreed with the decision to use the United Way for this job.

Chairman James said that everyone will be considered and will be treated in a fair and honorable way.

Mr. Garrison said that the reason this process has not been publicized more is because he felt he should inform the Board of Commissioners prior to getting the information out to the public. This sign up process will begin tomorrow.

UPON MOTION by Commissioner Savage, seconded by Commissioner Ward, to approve the budget amendment as follows:

ACCOUNT NO.	TITLE OF ACCOUNT	INCREASE	DECREASE
To be assigned	NC Hurricane Relief	727,965	
To be assigned	NC Hurricane Relief	727,965	

Commissioner Bowen stated that he believed if people were already receiving FEMA funds they were not eligible for these funds.

Chairman James called for a vote on this motion and the motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Budget Amendment for Mental Health Crisis Counseling

Ms. Bryan presented an additional budget amendment from FEMA for crisis counseling.

UPON MOTION by Commissioner Hammond, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the budget amendment as follows:

ACCOUNT NO.	TITLE OF ACCOUNT	INCREASE	DECREASE
# To be assigned(Rev)	FEMA/NC Crisis Counseling Grant	53,598	
Exp.	Salaries and Benefits	38,338	
Exp.	Equipment	7,110	
Exp.	Travel	6,200	
Exp.	Supplies	1,950	

Ms. Bryan stated that this is a sixty day grant and she will return later with a long term grant.

Debris Removal - Phil Dickerson

Mr. Dickerson reported that the North Carolina Department of Transportation started picking up debris on Saturday and then on Monday morning they got calls because they picked up people's items that had been left out to dry. He stated that there is a request in for pick up of debris on non-system streets and they will pickup anywhere in the County including municipalities if the municipalities choose to participate.

Mr. Dickerson reported that on October 22, 1999 bids will received for removal of mobile homes which the Wooten Company will be assisting with the bid packages. There will be a meeting the following Tuesday to award the bids. The Department of Transportation is not going to allow movements of the mobile homes and he said he has addressed this somewhat and will have to include demolition on-site rather than a staging site in the package.

Mr. Dickerson stated that if the private citizens will wait for the County to remove the mobile homes it will get done without a cost to the citizen because FEMA will reimburse the County but will not reimburse the individuals.

County Contract for Surveyors to Prepare Elevation Certificates - Phil Dickerson

Mr. Dickerson stated that the County is trying to structure the surveys needed with surveyors which will save individuals anywhere from \$200 to \$500. The surveys have to be done if someone wants to put their mobile home or trailer back on their own property that was flooded. He stated that he would bring this matter back at a future meeting.

Restrict Housing Repairs - Phil Dickerson

Mr. Dickerson said that people are tearing out walls and installation in homes that still have too much moisture content in them. He said the maximum moisture content should be around 19% and they are finding 30% in some of the homes. He informed the Board that if the County does not restrict the people from repairing the homes until the moisture has decreased, a few months or years later the walls and floors will buckle. He stated people are getting upset and he needs the Board's support in trying to get people to wait for repairs or there will be long term problems in these homes. Chairman James said that a good contractor would not start the repairs without the moisture content being under 19%. He also asked about the wiring in the homes that were flooded. Mr. Dickerson said the County has not been requiring people to replace wiring that has not been damaged.

Vice Chairman Savage stated that the County needs to get this type of information out in some type of brochure and that the County needs to do a better job on safety issues. Mr. Robinson said he had asked Arlen Holt, the County's Public Information Officer, to coordinate with Cooperative Extension, Home Builders Association, the City of Greenville on these

activities. He stated that they will be working on holding a Consumer Fair where the citizens will be able to come and gather all types of helpful information related to this disaster and the recovery process.

Chairman James said he wants the Manager to go on television and radio to address questions and answers as well as getting more information out in the local newspaper. Mr. Robinson stated that he is setting up people from other communities that have been through this type of flooding to be in Greenville and they will televise a panel of individuals to discuss citizen needs and how to help the communities rebuild.

Mr. Dickerson said that people who hire contractors need to know them and check their references before hiring them.

Mr. Robinson said the County Attorney was working with the City Attorney, and the Attorney General's office to provide contractor registration or a number where people could report complaints or compliments concerning contractors. Mr. Dickerson said this work is going to be expensive and that the contractors will be looking to protect themselves.

The Board discussed how this should be handled. Ms. Burgdorff reported that she and the City Attorney originally thought the Attorney General's Office was going to provide a team of people and equipment to assist with this effort. However, Ms. Burgdorff stated that the Attorney General's office has only offered the use of equipment if needed. She said she would report on this item on Monday, October 18th.

Substantial Damage Report

Mr. Dickerson stated that he had asked Mr. John Gerber, with the North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, to explain to the Board the term "substantial damage" and how it affects the home owners and reconstruction because if the damage is substantial they may not be able to rebuild in the flooded area on their own property. Mr. Dickerson said that there was a great deal of this in the Grifton area.

Vice Chairman Savage asked what the difference was in building in the floodway or flood zone and the people who rebuild homes on the coastline.

Mr. Robinson said that the County has maps of the damaged areas. Mr. Dickerson said that he will have inspectors here on Monday.

Mr. Gerber explained that the substantial damage was where the cost to restore the building is equal to or exceeds 50% of market value before damage. He said that some of the homes may require raised elevation. The homes have to meet all the building standards even under mitigating circumstances. Mr. George Currin and Ms. Russell with FEMA were also present.

Mr. Gerber, said that the concept of substantial damage is very complex. He stated that it must be enforced on a local level through locally adopted ordinances. A contractual agreement is made with the local government that they will enforce the ordinance and then FEMA will provide financial assistance. There is a portion of property that is in the floodway within the flood zone. The regulation only applies to the 100 year flood zone and they are looking at all the flooded areas to see if the flood zone maps are out of date and need to be revised. They are getting the information from the local government. Mr. Gerber stated that some of the flooded areas exceeded the 500 year flood zone. He said that it will take some time to go through the whole area. He stated that in some instances you can build back in the same place as long as you stay within the same "footprint" of the original structure. Mr. Gerber said that a basic elevation can be done in a short period of time but rebuilding will also have to meet new construction standards.

He also stated that anyone who had taken out insurance since June 1, 1997, they should be eligible for up to \$15,000 to help pay for the elevation. If they did not have this insurance, they could be considered in part of the buyout program.

Commissioner Hammond said that the warehouse where he kept vehicles and equipment for the funeral home was in the floodway and to build it back they would have to elevate it twelve feet. Chairman James stated that he had to leave at this time, at 8:30 p.m. and asked Vice Chairman Savage to chair the meeting.

UPON MOTION by Commissioner Bowen, seconded by Commissioner Hammond, the Board voted unanimously to excuse Eugene James from the meeting at this time.

Mr. Robinson wanted to make sure that the public understood that if their home was in the one hundred year flood area, the law requires that if a structure is damaged 50% or more, the structure will have to be raised.

Commissioner Ward stated that in conjunction with that statement, people cannot build a new structure in the floodway. Mr. Gerber said that if they build it must cause no impact on adjacent properties. He stated that these homeowners should proceed with the hazard mitigation program and that it is an excellent program. If the owner wants to be bought out, then the State will buy-out the structure. Mr. Robinson said this process is not as quick and easy as it sounds, so the citizens need to be patient and work through the process. Mr. Dickerson stated that this is a local program and would have to be enforced locally. He asked Mr. Gerber to explain what happens if these codes are not enforced on the local level. Mr. Gerber stated that if these regulations are not enforced, flood insurance and disaster assistance would not be available through FEMA. Mr. Robinson said the County needs voluntarily participation in this program.

Mr. Robinson said the purpose for this meeting was because he wanted the Board to have as much knowledge about this process as possible.

Mr. George Currin, with FEMA, said that the surveys being required and funded by the County is an excellent service for the citizens. The surveys help the people know how high they will have to rebuild their houses and now is the time for people to make any changes during the Presidential Declaration of a Disaster. They need to get proper permits and meet new electrical codes. He said the County is on the right tract with these activities.

Mr. Robinson stated that it may take a while for new maps to be drawn and people may find themselves in the new flood plain. They will be required to have flood insurance on mortgages.

Vice Chairman Savage said that this was an informational meeting and they had provided the Board with plenty of information.

Commissioners' Comments

Commissioner Bowen stated that he was upset because he has told people in his area and others that this money from the Governor's fund was for people who did not receive other benefits. He said if you are Mexican, the government is going to take care of you. He expressed concern that people do not have to have a social security number. He said that this funding from the Governor is not being treated at all as he understood it was supposed to be administered.

Commissioner Hammond commended people who came to Greenville for the East Carolina University game on Saturday and would not take hotel rooms from the homeless. He said he had received a call about a family that was asked to leave the Boys and Girls Club on

Sunday. He also expressed concern about the elderly population and how they don't have the funding for loans to rebuild. He cited several situations that he had come in contact with.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan J. Banks, CMC
Clerk to the Board