

**Pitt County Board of Commissioners
Greenville, North Carolina
Monday, August 31, 2020 Minutes**

Board of Commissioners met on Monday, August 31, 2020 at 2:00 PM in the Eugene James Auditorium, Pitt County Office Building, 1717 W 5th Street, Greenville, North Carolina.

Board Members Present:

Melvin McLawhorn, Chairman
Tom Coulson, Vice Chairman
Alex Albright, Commissioner
Mike Fitzpatrick, Commissioner
Ann Floyd Huggins, Commissioner
Lauren White, Commissioner
Beth B. Ward, Commissioner

Board Members in Attendance:

Mary Perkins-Williams, Commissioner

Board Members Absent:

Christopher W. Nunnally, Commissioner

Staff Present:

Scott Elliott, County Manager
Janis Gallagher, County Attorney
Mike Taylor, Deputy County Manager/Chief Information Officer
Brian Barnett, Deputy County Manager/Chief Financial Officer
Kimberly W. Hines, Clerk to the Board
Kelly Andrews, Interim Industrial Development Director
Dr. John Silvernail, Public Health Director
Florida Hardy, Human Resources Director

Welcome

Mr. Elliott stated today's meeting was called to hear a report from Dr. Silvernail regarding COVID-19 and a closed session for economic development. Chairman McLawhorn welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Call to Order

Chairman McLawhorn called the meeting to order.

Roll Call

Motion:

Motion to excuse Commissioner Chris Nunnally.
Motion made by Commissioner Ann Floyd Huggins.
Motion seconded by Commissioner Mike Fitzpatrick.
Motion passed unanimously.

Items for Report

Information Provided with the Agenda

Dr. John Silvernail will attend to provide an update on the Coronavirus/COVID-19 response.

Staff Recommendation

Report only.

Meeting Notes

Dr. Silvernail stated as of today, August 31, 2020, the total cases are 3,490 which equates to 1.9 percent of the Pitt County population. He stated 2,239 are recovered and there have been 19 deaths. He stated there are 1,232 active cases or cases that are less than fifteen days old. He stated 6.7 cases per 1,000 of COVID tests are returning positive in Pitt County. He stated additional testing is being conducted at Pitt County Detention Center this afternoon in cell blocks A and B. He stated East Carolina University is hosting a large testing event for students today and tomorrow. He stated they anticipate testing roughly 800 students that remain on campus. He stated individual cases have been identified in faculty and students within Pitt County Schools but ongoing transmission has not been identified. He stated the Board of Education asked his opinion in regard to the rise in positive numbers. He stated he made that recommendation in a written letter to the Chair of the Board of Education. He stated they chose not to follow his recommendation. He assured the Board of Commissioners that he continues to work closely with the Board of Education to promote and protect the health of Pitt County School students, faculty and staff.

Commissioner Perkins-Williams asked for a report of the number of cases by school. Dr. Silvernail stated it is provided on the school board's dashboard for the Board of Education. He stated he is aware of cases at J.H. Rose, Chicod, Belvoir Elementary, Northwest and Wellcome Middle.

Commissioner Floyd Huggins asked how the virus entered the Detention Center. Dr. Silvernail stated there are two plausible roots. He stated one is cases were identified after detainees returned from court and outside medical appointments. He stated there was also a guard identified as positive in the first round of testing. He stated three additional guards have since tested positive that work in the infected cell block. He stated the most likely scenario is an asymptomatic Detention Officer brought it into the Detention Center. Commissioner Floyd Huggins asked if the employees were masked. Dr. Silvernail stated prior to this event, masks were by choice.

Mr. Elliott stated from a policy standpoint the Sheriff mandates the Detention Center.

Commissioner Albright asked if the Sheriff still mandates the Detention Center following the Boards August 17, 2020 masking policy. Mr. Elliott stated technically, yes. Mr. Elliott stated the only oversight control of the Sheriff is budgetary. He stated she is constitutionally responsible for the operation of her office as well as the Detention Center.

Mrs. Gallagher stated the Sheriff is a separate elected official who has the ability to operate her office in the way she deems most appropriate. She stated she also uses county facilities to do so. She stated the Board of Commissioners policy is applicable to county facilities.

She stated she believes the Sheriff has taken the position that is within her discretion and is now requiring masking.

Mr. Elliott stated following the Board of Commissioners action on August 17, 2020, he immediately communicated with Department Heads and then employees that the week of August 17th would be used to inform and educate and enforcement would begin on Monday, August 24, 2020.

Mrs. Gallagher stated it is her opinion that the Board of Commissioners control the facilities they own, including those used by the Sheriff's Office.

Commissioner Albright asked about the plan for ongoing testing sites.

Dr. Silvernail stated testing is being provided at the Health Department on Tuesday and Thursday's. He stated they have tested almost 300 people per session. He stated when Pitt County Schools reopened, they lost many of the testing sites. He stated Commissioner Floyd Huggins suggested a possible testing site location and he is looking into the site as well as staffing the site. He stated they have also been working with Vidant to combine efforts.

Chairman McLawhorn asked what the average turnaround time for testing is. Dr. Silvernail stated the turnaround is highly dependent on the labs. He stated the Health Department is using the Vidant lab and generally as results back within 24-hours. He stated urgent testing is available within hours. He stated Lab Corp's time had been pushed to 7 days. He stated some of the smaller labs are about 3-4 days.

Closed Session

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4) - Economic Development - Janis Gallagher

Information Provided with the Agenda

It is suggested that this Board go into closed session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(4) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body.

Staff Recommendation

Move to go into closed session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(4) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body.

Motion:

Move to go into closed session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(4) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by the public body in negotiations.

Motion made by Commissioner Beth B. Ward.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Ann Floyd Huggins.

Motion passed unanimously.

Motion:

Motion to return to open session.

Motion made by Commissioner Mary Perkins-Williams.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Beth B. Ward.
Motion passed unanimously.

Adjourn

Motion:

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:55 p.m.

Motion made by Commissioner Beth B. Ward.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Mary Perkins-Williams.

Motion passed

Vote Record:

Beth B. Ward Yes

Tom Coulson Yes

Melvin McLawhorn Yes

Mary Perkins-Williams Yes

Ann Floyd Huggins Yes

Alex Albright Yes

Mike Fitzpatrick No

Lauren White Yes

Voting Totals:

Yes: 7 No: 1

Respectfully Submitted,

Kimberly W. Hines
Clerk to the Board