

**AGENDA
CRAVEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION
MONDAY, APRIL 17, 2017
8:30 A.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

INVOCATION

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVE AGENDA

1. CONSENT AGENDA
 - A. Minutes of April 3, 2017
 - B. Tax Releases and Refunds
 - C. CARTS Request to Set Public Hearing for ADA Complementary Paratransit Policy
 - D. Finance Budget Amendments

2. PRESENTATION OF UPCOMING STIP PROJECTS ON US 17: Bill Kincannon, Division 2 Project Development Engineer, NCDOT and Jeff Cabaniss, Division 2 Planning Engineer

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS

3. PLANNING – SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY ORDINANCE: Jason Frederick, Planner II

4. FINANCE – BUDGET AMENDMENT: Craig Warren, Finance Director

5. APPOINTMENTS

6. COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT: Jim Hicks

7. COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT: Jack Veit

8. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

RECESS TO RECONVENE IN WORK SESSION IN ELECTIONS TRAINING ROOM
ON FIRST FLOOR

RECESS TO COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF CRAVEN MET IN REGULAR SESSION IN THE COMMISSIONERS’ ROOM OF THE CRAVEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 406 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA, ON MONDAY APRIL 17, 2017. THE MEETING CONVENED AT 8:30 A.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Chairman Thomas F. Mark
- Commissioner Jason R. Jones
- Commissioner George S. Liner
- Commissioner Theron L. McCabe
- Commissioner Johnnie Sampson Jr.
- Commissioner Steve Tyson – (remote participation)

MEMBERS ABSENT:

- Vice Chairman Scott C. Dacey

STAFF PRESENT:

- Jack B. Veit III, County Manager
- Gene Hodges, Assistant County Manager
- Craig Warren, Finance Director
- Amber Parker, Human Resources Director
- Gwendolyn M. Bryan, Clerk to the Board
- Jim Hicks, County Attorney

Following an invocation by Commissioner Mark and the Pledge of Allegiance, Commissioner McCabe moved to approve the agenda, as presented, seconded by Commissioner Liner. Commissioner Mark requested that Commissioners’ comments be omitted from the agenda. Commissioner McCabe moved to amend the motion to omit Commissioners’ comments, as requested, seconded by Commissioner Liner and unanimously carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of April 3, 2017

Commissioner Liner moved to approve the minutes of April 3, 2017, as presented, seconded by Commissioner McCabe and unanimously carried in a roll call vote.

Tax Releases and Refunds

Commissioner Liner moved to approve the following tax releases and refunds, as presented, seconded by Commissioner McCabe and unanimously carried in a roll call vote.

Credits

TAXPAYER NAME	TICKET#	AMOUNT
GASKINS, LATHAM L JR NOT IN BUSINESS 1/1/2015	2015-0091061	\$26.16
GASKINS, LATHAM L JR NOT IN BUSINESS 1/1/2016	2016-0090609	\$23.71
JENKINS, NICOLE C DID NOT OWN 1/1/2016	2016-0030036	\$81.55
MARSHALL, NAOMI NOT IN BUSINESS 1/1/2011	2011-0092022	\$13.35
MARSHALL, NAOMI NOT IN BUSINESS 1/1/2012	2012-0090903	\$12.47

WATSON, GEORGE MILITARY EXEMPT	2015-0091549	\$97.16
WATSON, GEORGE MILITARY EXEMPT	2016-0060837	\$98.90
	7 – CREDIT MEMO (S)	\$353.30

Refunds

JENKINS, NICOLE C DID NOT OWN 1/1/2013	2013-0028747	\$80.98
JENKINS, NICOLE C DID NOT OWN 1/1/2014	2014-0029392	\$93.17
JENKINS, NICOLE C DID NOT OWN 1/1/2015	2015-0029820	\$83.96
	3 – REFUND (S)	\$258.11

CARTS REQUEST TO SET PUBLIC HEARING FOR ADA COMPLEMENTARY PARATRANSIT POLICY

CARTS requested a public hearing for the next Board of Commissioner’s meeting, May 1, 2017, to receive public comment on CARTS ADA Complementary Paratransit Policy, with consideration for approval scheduled for May 15, or following the public hearing if no comments are received.

Commissioner Liner moved to set a public hearing for May 1, 2017 at 7:00 p.m., as requested, seconded by Commissioner McCabe and unanimously carried in a roll call vote.

Finance Budget Amendments

Commissioner Liner moved to approve the following budget amendments, as presented, seconded by Commissioner McCabe and unanimously carried in a roll call vote.

Fire Department

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
240-0000-399-01-00 Rhems	\$141.00	240-2900-410-46-00 General Insurance	\$141.00
241-0000-399-01-00 Vanceboro	\$114.00	241-2900-410-46-00 General Insurance	\$114.00
242-0000-399-01-00 Tri-Comm	\$114.00	242-2900-410-46-00 General Insurance	\$114.00
243-0000-399-01-00 Little Swift Creek	\$114.00	243-2900-410-46-00 General Insurance	\$114.00
244-0000-399-01-00 Cove City	\$ 38.00	244-2901-410-46-00 General Insurance	\$ 38.00
245-0000-399-01-00 Harlowe	\$141.00	245-2900-410-46-00 General Insurance	\$141.00
246-0000-399-01-00 #6 Twp.	\$141.00	246-2900-410-46-00 General Insurance	\$141.00
247-0000-399-01-00 #7 Twp.	\$150.00	247-2900-410-46-00 General Insurance	\$150.00
248-0000-399-01-00 West New Bern	\$114.00	248-2900-410-46-00 General Insurance	\$114.00
249-0000-399-01-00 #9 Twp.	\$ 91.00	249-2900-410-46-00 General Insurance	\$ 91.00

244-0000-399-01-00	\$ 91.00	244-2902-410-46-00	\$91.00
Dover		General Insurance	
TOTAL	\$1,249.00	TOTAL	\$1,249.00

Justification: To cover shortage of Fire Departments General Insurance line item for VFIS invoice dated 04/7/17 in the amount of \$20,252.00

Rescue Squads

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
101-0000-399-01-00	\$2,044.00	101-2825-410-46-10	\$186.00
		General Insurance	
		101-2827-410-46-10	\$295.00
		General Insurance	
		101-2828-410-46-10	\$372.00
		General Insurance	
		101-2829-410-46-10	\$424.00
		General Insurance	
		101-2830-410-46-10	\$ 39.00
		General Insurance	
		101-2831-410-46-10	\$728.00
		General Insurance	
TOTAL	\$2,044.00	TOTAL	\$2,044.00

Justification: To cover shortage in line items for Rescue Squad General Insurance per invoice from VFIS of North Carolina dated 04/04/17 in the amount of \$20,252.00

PRESENTATION OF UPCOMING STIP PROJECTS ON US 17

Bill Kincannon, Division 2 Project Development Engineer with the NC Department of Transportation, presented the following upcoming STIP projects on U.S. 17.

#R-3403B – US 17 from north of SR1433 (Antioch Road) to NC 43. The length of this project is 7.42 miles with a cost of \$36.2 M. Right-of-Way acquisitions are scheduled for 2023, with construction in 2025. He is hopeful that the timeframes may be moved forward to be able to let contracts in 2022.

The expected outcome of the projects is increased safety and mobility.

Commissioner Jones inquired what will happen to the light at the intersection of U.S. Hwy. 43. Mr. Kincannon responded that the intersection at the light will be re-configured based on traffic studies.

#R2513A – US 17 from NC 43 to SR1438 (Spruill Town Road). The length of this project is 1.9 miles with a cost of \$14.7M and slated for construction in 2021, right-of-way scheduled in 2019.

Commissioner Jones asked if there are projections with the intersection going into Vanceboro. Mr. Kincannon stated that traffic engineers will study the traffic and revision will be based on those results.

Commissioner Jones moved to support moving forward with the projects, seconded by Commissioner McCabe and unanimously carried.

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS: PLANNING – SOLAR ENERGY FACILITY ORDINANCE

Jason Frederick, Planner II with the Craven County Planning Department, presented proposed changes to the Craven County Solar Energy Facility Ordinance that were discussed at the Board’s February 20 work session. He provided a brief summary of those changes including changes in decommissioning bond requirements which were requested by the Commissioners during the work session, decreasing bonds from \$100,000 to \$50,000.

Planning Department staff requested a public hearing for the May 1, 2017 Board of Commissioners meeting scheduled for 7:00 p.m.

Summary of non-substantive revisions addressed the following:

1. Consistency
2. Responsibility
3. Environmental Assessments
4. Setback revisions
5. Aviation notification

Other Considerations:

1. Adjacent property owner notification
2. Decommissioning bond

The Planning Board has approved all modifications.

Commissioner McCabe moved to set a public hearing for 7:00 p.m. on May 1, 2017, seconded by Commissioner Sampson and unanimously carried.

DEPARTMENT MATTERS: FINANCE – BUDGET AMENDMENT

Craig Warren, Finance Director, presented the following budget amendment for the Board’s approval. Commissioner Sampson moved for its approval, as requested, seconded by Commissioner McCabe and unanimously carried in a roll call vote.

Dental

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
101-0000-399-01-00 Fund Balance	\$97,830.00	101-5500-440-97-02 Transfer to Reserve	\$97,830.00
TOTAL	\$97,830.00	TOTAL	\$97,830.00

Justification: Need to move half of FY16 dental program profits to Capital Reserve for future repairs/replacement of dental trailer. Replacement is currently programmed into the County’s CIP to be replaced in FY21.

NHAC ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. Peter Geisler, Chairman of the Nursing Home Advisory Committee, presented the Committee’s annual report to the Board, with the following highlights:

- Significant turnover has been somewhat stabilized
- A good supply of CNS’s remains a challenge
- Cleanliness at Pruitt Trent is being monitored
- Many homes in the area are no longer able to accept VA patients due to legislation that requires pay scale and benefits at the federal level.
- An abuse prevention training module was conducted in February
- A training session on allegations of abuse has also been conducted

Commissioner Sampson stated his opinion that patients are often not getting the care needed, and some seem to be overmedicated. He asked that the Committee look into this. He also commented that staff seem overworked.

APPOINTMENTS

Firemen's Relief Fund Board of Trustees: John Norris

It was the consensus of the Board to defer this appointment.

Adult Care Home Advisory Committee: Myra Bergmann

It was the consensus of the Board that this appointment be deferred.

Planning Board: David Rink

It was the consensus of the Board to defer this appointment.

Upcoming Appointments

The Board was apprised of the following upcoming appointments to boards and committees:

May

- Community Child Protection Team
- Fire Tax Commissioners
- Trillium
- Nursing Home Advisory Committee
- New Bern-Craven County Library Board

June

- ABC Board
- Craven Community College Board of Trustees
- Social Services Board
- Eastern Carolina Workforce Development Board
- EMS Advisory Council
- Firemen's Relief Fund
- Fire Tax Commissioners
- Havelock Board of Adjustment
- Havelock Planning Board
- Recreation and Parks Advisory Committee
- Coastal Carolina Airport Authority

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

*Initial Offer to Purchase Real Property – 615 Miller Street, New Bern
(Parcel Number 8-012-265)*

County Attorney, Jim Hicks, presented an offer received by Craven County and the City of New Bern in the amount of \$262.50 for the property located at 615 Miller Street, New Bern, which was acquired through a tax foreclosure in 1981. The total taxes and costs that were foreclosed on were \$733.38. The current tax value is \$1,050.00.

The City of New Bern previously accepted this offer. Commissioner Jones moved to adopt the following resolution to accept the offer and advertise for upset bids, seconded by Commissioner McCabe and unanimously carried.

RESOLUTION

THAT WHEREAS, Craven County has received an Offer to Purchase a parcel of property owned by it identified as 615 Miller Street, New Bern, NC, Tax Parcel Number 8-012-265, and more particularly described in Deed Book 990, Page 643 in the Craven County Registry (hereinafter the "Real Property"), a copy of said offer is attached hereto as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners is authorized to sell the County's interest in the property pursuant to the provisions of North Carolina General Statute §160A-269.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CRAVEN COUNTY:

1. That the Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the initiation of the upset bid process for the Real Property by advertising notice of the offer to purchase in accordance with the provisions of North Carolina General Statute §160A-269.

2. That the County Manager, Clerk and/or Attorney are authorized to take all actions necessary to accomplish the purposes of this Resolution.

ADOPTED THIS 17th DAY OF APRIL, 2017.

*Initial Offer to Purchase Real Property – 617 Miller Street, New Bern
(Parcel Number 8-012-264)*

Mr. Hicks presented an offer received by Craven County and the City of New Bern in the amount of \$5,500.00 for the property located at 617 Miller Street, New Bern, which was acquired through a tax foreclosure. The total taxes and costs that were foreclosed on were \$10,685.92. The current tax value is \$21,570.00.

The City of New Bern previously accepted this offer. Commissioner McCabe moved to adopt the following resolution to accept the offer and advertise for upset bids, seconded by Commissioner Liner and unanimously carried.

RESOLUTION

THAT WHEREAS, Craven County has received an Offer to Purchase a parcel of property owned by it identified as 617 Miller Street, New Bern, NC, Tax Parcel Number 8-012-264, and more particularly described in Deed Book 3484, Page 2007 in the Craven County Registry (hereinafter the "Real Property"), a copy of said offer is attached hereto as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners is authorized to sell the County's interest in the property pursuant to the provisions of North Carolina General Statute §160A-269.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CRAVEN COUNTY:

1. That the Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the initiation of the upset bid process for the Real Property by advertising notice of the offer to purchase in accordance with the provisions of North Carolina General Statute §160A-269.

2. That the County Manager, Clerk and/or Attorney are authorized to take all actions necessary to accomplish the purposes of this Resolution.

ADOPTED THIS 17th DAY OF APRIL, 2017.

*Initial Offer to Purchase Real Property – 605 First Avenue, New Bern
(Parcel Number 8-012-210)*

Mr. Hicks presented an offer received by Craven County and the City of New Bern in the amount of \$5,500.00 for the property located at 605 First Avenue, New Bern, which was

acquired through a tax foreclosure. The total taxes and costs that were foreclosed on were \$11,044.24. The current tax value is \$21,250.00.

The City of New Bern previously accepted this offer. Commissioner Jones moved to adopt the following resolution to accept the offer and advertise for upset bids, seconded by Commissioner McCabe and unanimously carried.

RESOLUTION

THAT WHEREAS, Craven County has received an Offer to Purchase a parcel of property owned by it identified as 605 First Avenue, New Bern, NC, Tax Parcel Number 8-012-210, and more particularly described in Deed Book 3484, Page 1993 in the Craven County Registry (hereinafter the "Real Property"), a copy of said offer is attached hereto as Exhibit A; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners is authorized to sell the County's interest in the property pursuant to the provisions of North Carolina General Statute §160A-269.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CRAVEN COUNTY:

1. That the Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the initiation of the upset bid process for the Real Property by advertising notice of the offer to purchase in accordance with the provisions of North Carolina General Statute §160A-269.

2. That the County Manager, Clerk and/or Attorney are authorized to take all actions necessary to accomplish the purposes of this Resolution.

ADOPTED THIS 17th DAY OF APRIL, 2017.

*Final Offer to Purchase Real Property – Adams Creek Road, Craven County
(Parcel Number 5-021-035)*

Mr. Hicks presented an offer previously received and tentatively approved by Craven County in the amount of \$1,840.00 for the property located on Adams Creek Road, Craven County, which was acquired through a tax foreclosure. The total taxes and costs that were foreclosed on were \$1,838.07. The current tax value is \$12,000.00. The offer was advertised, and there were no upset bids.

Commissioner McCabe moved to adopt the following resolution accepting a final offer, seconded by Commissioner Sampson and unanimously carried.

RESOLUTION

Tax Parcel Number 5-021-035, Craven County, North Carolina

THAT WHEREAS, Craven County has received an offer to purchase a parcel of property owned by the County, identified as Tax Parcel Number 5-021-035, and being more particularly described herein; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners is authorized to sell the County's interest in the property pursuant to North Carolina General Statute §160A-269; and

WHEREAS, the offer to purchase was advertised as required by said statute; and

WHEREAS, the final offer to purchase, after the upset bid period, was in the sum of \$1,840.00 by WEK Investments, LLC; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners deems it advisable and in the best interest of the County to sell its interest in the subject property to the successful bidder and to convey its interest in said property by quitclaim deed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CRAVEN COUNTY:

Section 1. That the last and highest bid of WEK Investments, LLC in the sum of \$1,840.00 for said parcel identified as Tax Parcel Number 5-021-035, and being more particularly described herein, be and the same is hereby accepted as to the County's interest in said property, and the Chairman, County Manager and/or Clerk be and they are hereby authorized and directed to execute a quitclaim deed to the purchasers for the County's interest in said property, and to further execute any and all other documents related to the sale of the same.

Section 2. That a copy of said quitclaim deed is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, and the original deed shall be delivered to said purchaser once the same has been executed on behalf of the County, upon payment of the purchase price.

Section 3. That the subject property is more particularly described as follows:

All that certain lot or parcel of land lying and being situate in Number Five (5) Township, Craven County, North Carolina, and being more particularly described as follows:

All of that certain property more fully described in Deed Book 2430 at Page 255 in the Craven County Registry. This property is also commonly referred to by its tax parcel identification number which is 5-021-035.

ADOPTED THIS 17th DAY OF APRIL, 2017.

*Final Offer to Purchase Real Property – Hills Neck Road, Craven County
(Parcel Number 1-015-1-009)*

Mr. Hicks presented an offer previously received and tentatively approved by Craven County in the amount of \$1,865.00 for the property located on Hills Neck Road, Craven County, which was acquired through a tax foreclosure. The total taxes and costs that were foreclosed on were \$1,864.90. The current tax value is \$12,000.00. The offer was advertised and there were no upset bids.

Commissioner Liner moved to adopt the following resolution accepting the final offer, seconded by Commissioner Sampson and unanimously carried.

RESOLUTION

Tax Parcel Number 1-015-1-009, Craven County, North Carolina

THAT WHEREAS, Craven County has received an offer to purchase a parcel of property owned by the County, identified as Tax Parcel Number 1-015-1-009, and being more particularly described herein; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners is authorized to sell the County's interest in the property pursuant to North Carolina General Statute §160A-269; and

WHEREAS, the offer to purchase was advertised as required by said statute; and

WHEREAS, the final offer to purchase, after the upset bid period, was in the sum of \$1,865.00 by WEK Investments, LLC; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners deems it advisable and in the best interest of the County to sell its interest in the subject property to the successful bidder and to convey its interest in said property by quitclaim deed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CRAVEN COUNTY:

Section 1. That the last and highest bid of WEK Investments, LLC in the sum of \$1,865.00 for said parcel identified as Tax Parcel Number 1-015-1-009, and being more particularly described herein, be and the same is hereby accepted as to the County's interest in said property, and the Chairman, County Manager and/or Clerk be and they are hereby authorized and directed to execute a quitclaim deed to the purchasers for the County's interest in said property, and to further execute any and all other documents related to the sale of the same.

Section 2. That a copy of said quitclaim deed is attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, and the original deed shall be delivered to said purchaser once the same has been executed on behalf of the County, upon payment of the purchase price.

Section 3. That the subject property is more particularly described as follows:

All that certain lot or parcel of land lying and being situate in Number One (1) Township, Craven County, North Carolina, and being more particularly described as follows:

All of that certain property more fully described in Deed Book 3283 at Page 915 in the Craven County Registry. This property is also commonly referred to by its tax parcel identification number which is 1-015-1-009.

ADOPTED THIS 17th DAY OF APRIL, 2017.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

County Manager, Jack Veit, presented a draft Policy to Prohibit Smoking and Vaping on the Craven County Courthouse Grounds as directed by the Board at its last meeting. He stated that G.S. 130A-498 and 153A-121 cite the County's authority to devise a policy, and 130A-498(c)(1) provides a penalty section.

Commissioner Linder asked about provisions for employees in the building who smoke. He suggested making the smoking area on the Administration Building grounds recognizable with signage.

Commissioner Jones asked about designating an area on the courthouse grounds. Mr. Veit explained that the courthouse grounds are configured in a way that would not accommodate a smoking pavilion.

It was the consensus to refer the matter to the Facilities Committee.

Mr. Veit reported that the Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) satellite location in Havelock is proceeding well and the key will be released within the next two days. A ribbon cutting is expected to be held on May 19.

He reported that the animal shelter is now vertical, with the roof installed. The project is still on schedule. Construction for renovations on the old section is expected to begin in late summer.

He commented on his attendance, along with several Commissioners, at the NCACC District meeting held recently.

At 9:45 a.m. the Board went into recess to reconvene in the first floor Elections training room.

At 10:10 a.m. the Board reconvened with the N.C. legislative delegation: Senator Norman Sanderson and Representatives John Bell, George Graham and Michael Speciale. The Chairman thanked the Senator and Representatives for their time.

Senator Sanderson stated that Craven County is the only county out of the three he represents to schedule an informal session.

He provided the following update:

Senator Sanderson stated that the General Assembly will have eight days to meet the Senate crossover deadline on April 27 after reconvening. There are over 600 pieces of legislation filed in the Senate and only a small number have made it through the various committees. He is hoping for a crossover extension.

He reported that the legislative is on target to finish the budget process by mid-June and priorities are already in place. The General Assembly will soon know revenue projections from state tax. They are working on the assumption of a flat budget. Local priorities will be considered in trying to organize the priority of pieces of legislation coming in the committees in the last days before the crossover deadline.

Representative Bell stated that three out of four counties he represents hold informal listening sessions with their legislators. He reported that there are over 950 House bills filed. The crossover deadline extension has not been agreed upon and the House and the Senate must both agree. He reported that HB13 has passed the house and there is likely to be a compromise. The result will not be known until mid-June.

He reported that much of Hurricane Matthew funds have not been used, and there is a need to help citizens know how to access them. Otherwise, it will be difficult to appropriate any additional funds.

Representative Graham stated that the legislature is stuck on issues that are important to him; education, economic development, senior citizens needs, agriculture and jobs. He stated that the legislative delegation works well together, even if they do not agree on everything. He stated that Representative Bell has been very active on the jobs front, and it is important for them to show that they are on the same page when it comes to commerce and attracting jobs.

Representative Speciale commented on the Article 5 bill, gun bills, a drone bill authorizing EMS usage, and school calendar changes allowing determination of calendars by local boards of education. There are 70 counties that currently support the proposed legislation regarding the setting of school calendars, and currently there are pilot programs for 20 counties.

Commissioner Liner commented on the passing of HB13 by the House. He asked Senator Sanderson to get on board with it on the Senate side. Rigid reduction in class sizes would hurt with school financing on the local level. The bill needs to move it forward.

Restoration of lottery funding is also an urgent need, as commitments were made on the promise of these funds. Commissioner Liner stated that in regards to S234, sponsored by Senator Brown, and H481, Tier I grants do not help Craven County as a substitute for the statutory level of lottery funding. The State needs to get back to what was agreed upon and voted on by the citizens. Representative Bell noted that even if there were to be a return to the old statutory rate of distribution, it would not fulfill the needs. Senator Brown's proposal would advance through all the tiers in the long term. The State must be able to generate new money to accomplish this.

Representative Graham advised to proceed carefully, lest any funding solution should prove unsustainable.

Commissioner Liner introduced the Commissioners' second priority legislative goal concerning repeal of local Boards of Education ability to bring suit against counties over funding disputes. He asked for a moratorium to allow local boards to confer with their Commissioners.

He also expressed his concern for the real possibility of a Base Realignment and Closing cycle (BRAC) for 2018-19. The most recent State rating on schools is not helpful. Among BRAC priorities, schools is third, only after mission and encroachment issues. Craven is the only military county in North Carolina where schools are not supported by the Defense Department. He stated that the legislature must be mindful that the military generates over \$2 billion in economic impact.

Commissioner Mark advocated for increased funding for rural transportation and a stronger look at a nuisance lawsuit bill. Representative Speciale stated that the House passed the bill going forward to limit claims to value lost.

Commissioner Jones stated that as a member of the Craven County Health Board, he is concerned about less funds coming from the State for the elderly and Medicaid recipients. He asked that the General Assembly at the least, sustain the current level of funding. He stated that he is not supportive of another tax increase this year being necessitated by the State pushing more obligations down to the county level.

Commissioner Liner inquired about the status of the wind turbine legislation.

Senator Sanderson stated S-331 that protects military operations and its companion H465 are still alive in committee.

County Manager, Jack Veit, briefly summarized remaining legislative goals, as follows:

- Seek Legislation to increase state funding of local county Veteran's Service offices
- Oppose legislation that would weaken county management of nonemergency Medicaid transport.

- Seek Legislation for greater flexibility in county governments' use of 911 funds and protect current funding streams.
- Seek support for a Public Defender Program in Craven County.
- Support legislation to provide adequate funding to meet the Mental Health, Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Disorder service needs
- Emergency Management Drone Use

Senator Sanderson stated that he is working on changing criteria for distribution of funding to Veterans Services Offices. Veterans Services funding is statewide; however, all counties are not using the money. Funds allocated for those counties not using them are subject to reverting to the State for distribution for those that do need the funds.

Mr. Veit: #11

Senator Sanderson stated that the legislature is near reaching a determination concerning a public defender program. Getting the real cost was the hold-up. If it proves to be feasible, it will be in budget.

Commissioner Sampson mentioned a ditch in New Bern that needs a large buried pipe to alleviate flooding. Senator Sanderson recommended talking with the City of New Bern again. Funds may be coming forth to help localities with flood prevention.

At 11:05 a.m. the Board recessed to reconvene in the Commissioners' Room.

At 11:15 a.m. the Board reconvened.

Convention Center Expansion Study Report

Results of the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) consultant's feasibility study regarding a potential convention center expansion were presented by consultant, John Kaatz, of CSL. He stated that the ballroom is currently serving in a double duty function, as program/event space as well as exhibit space. The convention center is a community gathering place and an economic driver. Occupancy is 42-44% on average. Analysts generally like to see 50% occupancy for expansions and he recommended more fine-tuning of the existing space, while developing an additional 8,000 feet to expand the ballroom in addition to enhancing the registration area. Some events may also be moved to different seasons to balance the occupancy rate throughout the year. The current sales and marketing budget is relatively low. New Bern has amenities within a ½ mile radius of the convention center and the surrounding downtown area should mature to the pace of any expansion. There is a need, however, for additional hotel rooms.

Based on the survey, there is more potential for state/regional events, but the facility needs marketing. There are opportunities for managing existing parking better, such as micro additions of space and better policies.

Commissioner Liner asked about the next phase and funding. Mr. Kaatz stated that it could cost approximately \$300 per square foot and would involve architects for concept analysis.

Mr. Veit stated his concern about adding weight to already compromised pilings. There could also be other complications relative to new setbacks and environmental requirements. The current debt service on the Convention Center will end in 2019.

At 12:00 p.m. the Board recessed to reconvene at Cooperative Extension at 12:30 p.m.

RECESS TO COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

The Board was given an annual overview of the programs housed at the Cooperative Extension offices.

Commissioner Liner asked if money from the State for Hurricane Matthew recovery mentioned previously by the legislators can be used to assist farmers with hurricane recovery through FSA;

however, it was stated that the farmers who need this assistance do not qualify for the State funds.

At 1:15 p.m. Commissioner Jones moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Sampson and unanimously carried.

Chairman Thomas F. Mark
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Gwendolyn M. Bryan
Clerk to the Board