

**AGENDA
CRAVEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL SESSION
MONDAY, AUGUST 6, 2020
7:00 P.M.**

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVE AGENDA

1. PETITIONS OF CITIZENS
2. CONSENT AGENDA
 - A. Minutes of July 20, 2020 Regular Session
 - B. Tax Releases and Refunds
3. VOLT CENTER UPDATE: Dr. Raymond Staats
4. CONGRESSMAN GREG MURPHY MD – OFFICE UPDATE: Lauren Wandzel, District Staff Member

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS

5. SHERIFF – CELLBRITE (CELL PHONE ANALYZER) BUDGET AMENDMENT: Tony Lee, Administrative Captain
6. BOARD OF ELECTIONS – CARE ACT/HAVA FUNDS: Meloni Wray, Director of Elections
7. RECREATION & PARKS: Billy Wilkes, Recreation & Parks, Director
 - A. Creekside Park Dock Improvement Plan
 - B. Grant Match for New Swing Sets
8. FACILITIES – APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDER TO INCLUDE HVAC REPAIRS IN COURTHOUSE PROJECT: Gene Hodges, Assistant County Manager
9. HUMAN RESOURCES – OPIOID PROGRAM COMMUNITY OUTREACH BUDGET AMENDMENT: Amber Parker, Human Resources Director
10. APPOINTMENTS

11. COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT: Arey Grady
12. COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT: Jack Veit
13. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF CRAVEN MET IN SPECIAL SESSION IN THE COMMISSIONERS' ROOM OF THE CRAVEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 406 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NC, ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 6, 2020. THE MEETING CONVENED AT 7:00 P.M. THE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING WAS TO ADDRESS THE AGENDA ITEMS FROM THE REGULAR SESSION MEETING SLATED FOR MONDAY, AUGUST 3, 2020 THAT HAD TO BE CANCELED DUE TO TROPICAL STORM ISAIAS.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Thomas F. Mark
 Vice Chairman Jason R. Jones
 Commissioner Denny Bucher
 Chairman George S. Liner
 Commissioner Theron L. McCabe
 Commissioner E. T. Mitchell
 Commissioner Johnnie Sampson, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT:

Jack B. Veit, III, County Manager
 Gene Hodges, Assistant County Manager
 Craig Warren, Finance Director
 Amber Parker, Human Resources Director
 Arey Grady, County Attorney
 Nan Holton, Clerk to the Board

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, County Attorney, Arey Grady, recited the following invocation:

Lord God, we humbly come before You today, and we thank You for Your love and Your Grace and Your peace that is made available to us all.

God, we ask for Your divine wisdom and guidance here today, for You and You alone know the future and the things that are to come. We ask that You would lead us in the decisions we are a part of and that You would give us boldness to honor You.

Would You empower every man and woman in this room to use the life You have given them for good? Let us be leaders who follow Your example, leaders who love sacrificially, give selflessly, and serve graciously. May we all do our best to impact this incredible County and Nation of ours for the better.

*We ask Your blessing on our Commissioners, on our County and on our United States of America.
 In the name of Jesus, we pray.
 Amen.*

Based upon the invocation given by Pastor Randy Bezet at the June 25, 2015 session of the US House of Representatives

Chairman Mark remarked that the Agenda would need to be amended since Lauren Wandzel, District Staff Member from Congressman Greg Murphy's office, was unable to be present. Commissioner Liner motioned to amend the Agenda by tabling Item #4 until the August 17, 2020 meeting. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved unanimously.

PETITIONS OF CITIZENS

Chairman Mark read the Rules of Procedures related to Citizen Petitions. The following citizens addressed the Board:

1. *Stephen DiPiero, 4208 Rawley Road, New Bern*, presented information regarding access to the river along Gibbs Road.
2. *Eddie Games, 111 Wadsworth Lane, New Bern*, spoke in support of the waterfront dock improvements for Creekside Park that Recreation Director Billy Wilkes is seeking through the North Carolina Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Fund.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Mitchell motioned to approve the Consent Agenda consisting of the Minutes of July 20, 2020 Regular Session and the Tax Releases. Her motion was seconded by Commissioner Liner and approved in a 7-0 roll call vote.

Tax Releases

Credits

TAXPAYER NAME	TICKET#	AMOUNT
BROWN, GLENDA LEARY DID NOT OWN JANUARY 1	2015-7055	\$58.86
BROWN, GLENDA LEARY DID NOT OWN JANUARY 1	2016-7125	\$56.95
BROWN, GLANDA LEARY DID NOT OWN JANUARY 1	2017-7209	\$54.97
BROWN, GLENDA LEARY DID NOT OWN JANUARY 1	2018-7175	\$55.70
BROWN, GLENDA LEARY DID NOT OWN JANUARY 1	2019-205588	\$77.02
BROWN, JUSTIN ANTHONY DISCHARGED BANKRUPTCY	2012-542868	\$165.42
FAULK, ERIKA LAKEISHA DISCHARGED BANKRUPTCY	2012-552190	\$65.49
FULCHER, TODD A DISCHARGED BANKRUPTCY	2010-18506	\$67.18
JOHNSTON AMBULANCE SERVICE INC DISCHARGED BY BANKRUPTCY	2016-90710	\$412.91
MIDGETTE, LINCOLN JR DISCHARGED BY BANKRUPTCY	2013-92838	\$107.39
MIDGETTE, LINCOLN JR DISCHARGED BY BANKRUPTCY	2014-92610	\$143.70
MIDGETTE, LINCOLN JR DISCHARGED BY BANKRUPTCY	2015-39243	\$133.64
MONTGOMERIE, ROBERT NOT TAXABLE TO CRAVEN COUNTY	2019-212222	\$49.98
PIEDMONT AIRLINES INC DOUBLE BILLED	2020-403373	\$122.95
PIEDMONT AIRLINES INC DOUBLE BILLED	2020-403372	\$113.15

POUZAR, MICHAEL JAMES DID NOT OWN JANUARY 1	2019-211676	\$358.74
PRICE, GERALD FITZPATRICK DISHCHARGED BY BANKRUPTCY	2010-555338	\$39.06
PRICE, GERALD FITZPATRICK DISHCHARGED BY BANKRUPTCY	2011-506276	\$81.91
RICHARDS, JANE HRS DID NOT OWN JANUARY 1	2019-21288	\$16.07
SCHRECK, CRAIG CORRECTED DISCOVERED PROPERTY VALUE	2020-403423	\$689.46
TRENT ROAD PROPERTIES LLC DOUBLE BILLED	2019-401288	\$701.90
	21 – RELEASES	\$3,572.45

VOLT CENTER UPDATE

Craven Community College President, Dr. Raymond Staats, provided a VOLT Center update to the Board. He outlined the Volt Center timeline, dating back to September, 2015; and covered the First Year Operations, focusing on the type of instruction provided and the fact that 89 jobs had been generated from the training received. Dr. Staats highlighted the Phase 2 projects, inclusive of a Small Business Center, a Garage, and a Law Enforcement Simulation facility. Programming for the Small Business Center will include business counseling and space for entrepreneurial prototypes. Dr. Staats remarked that the Garage construction has started and programming for diesel mechanics and heavy equipment operators should begin in January 2021. He highlighted the Law Enforcement Simulator, with 5 screens capable of 300 degrees, which will enable critical thinking in real life scenarios as well as remedial firearms training. In reviewing the life cycle cost model for Phase 2, Dr. Staats revealed the need for an annual total of \$72,000 looking forward to FY 2022. He concluded his presentation with anticipated program needs for the future.

Commissioner Sampson expressed his pride in the VOLT Center.

There was discussion regarding the annual operational costs, funding for and training capabilities of the law enforcement simulator, creating a stronger path for high school students to get access to these trade skills, and how funds received for COVID19 were being expended.

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS: SHERIFF

Administrative Captain, Tony Lee, presented the Board with a Budget Amendment in the amount of \$12,640.00, transferring funds from the Federal Asset Forfeitures revenue to expenditures to allow for the purchase of Cellbrite (Cell Phone Analyzer) and the required training for the Craven County Sheriff's Office Crime Lab personnel to use this technology. He explained that Cellbrite is technology that is used for data extraction from cellular phones during criminal investigations. The Board of Commissioners had been provided a summary comparison between Cellbrite and Securus, the current program being used, in regards to cell phone analysis capabilities.

Commissioner Liner expressed frustration that one of the main selling points utilized the previous year was that Securus was capable of analyzing cell phones. Mr. Lee and Sheriff Hughes explained the time delays with Securus by having to mail the phones in for analysis, versus the ability to be self-reliant with Cellbrite, and not relying on other law enforcement agencies. Commissioner Liner requested data on how often they have utilized Securus the past 13 months; and how often they have had to rely on other law enforcement agencies with the Cellbrite equipment because of the need to have cases acted upon immediately.

Commissioner Mitchell inquired of its needs for citizen safety matters.

Commissioner McCabe made the motion to approve the Budget Amendment in the amount of \$12,640.00 to purchase Cellbrite and required training. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Sampson and approved in a 6-1 roll call vote (Nay: Liner).

Sheriff's Department

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1154310-33100 Federal Drug Forfeitures	\$12,640.00	1154310-47301 Capital Outlay over \$5,000	\$12,640.00
TOTAL	\$12,640.00	TOTAL	\$12,640.00

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS: ELECTIONS – CARES ACT/HAVA FUNDS

Elections Director, Meloni Wray, presented a budget amendment for federal funds to deliver economic relief to assist the Board of Elections to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19 for the 2020 Federal Election.

Craven County Board of Elections CARES Act Award:

- \$126,111; HAVA minimum \$10,000-maximum \$250,000 (first come/first serve)

Permissible Uses:

- Increased Postage
- Increase in Recruiting Poll Workers
- Security/Protection while Voting in the Office
- Training Aids/Online for Election Officials
- Lease of New One-Stop Sites
- PPE Packets for all Polling Locations, etc.

Commissioner Liner motioned to approve the following budget amendment in the amount of \$126,111.00, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

Elections

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1014160-33119	\$126,111.00	1014160-43201 Supplies	\$66,111.00
		1014160-42000 Postage	\$25,000.00
		1014160-42700 Advertising	\$10,000.00
		1014160-44000 Contracted Services	\$25,000.00
TOTAL	\$126,111.00	TOTAL	\$126,111.00

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS: RECREATION & PARKS

Creekside Park Dock Improvement Grant

Recreation and Parks Director, Billy Wilkes, reminded the Board he had presented the opportunity to submit a final application for waterfront dock improvements at Creekside Park at their July 20, 2020 meeting. Mr. Wilkes reviewed the three main focuses of the grant are to make the dock more inclusive, safe, and to replace all the existing boards and rails. He indicated that providing the public the opportunity to comment on this grant application was one of the requirements, which was met by this evening's Citizens' Petitions period. A second requirement is the Board's approval of this process, which he requested upon closing.

Commissioner McCabe motioned to approve the final grant application with the NC Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Fund. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

Grant Match for New Swing Sets

Mr. Wilkes reported that Rocky Run Park has one remaining original piece of equipment; a 1980’s swing set that needs to be replaced. Creekside Park also has one original swing set that was part of the first playground and is over 20 years old.

He stated that he was able to secure two grants towards the purchase of the swing sets. The first grant is from the Cherry Point Spouses Club in the amount of \$1,000. The second grant is from the Harold Bate Foundation in the amount of \$24,600 of which \$7,600 will go towards the purchase of the two swing sets. Mr. Wilkes requested that Craven County match the Harold Bate Foundation grant of \$7,600.

Mr. Wilkes addressed inquiries about the timeframe for completion. County Manager, Jack Veit, commended Mr. Wilkes for his efforts in pursuing grants to take on new projects.

Commissioner Mitchell motioned to approve the grant match of \$7,600, as requested, seconded by Commissioner Jones and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

Recreation & Parks

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
101300-39901	\$8,600.00	1015910-47302	\$16,200.00
Current Year Fund Balance		Other Improvements	
1015910-33500	\$7,600.00		
TOTAL	\$16,200.00	TOTAL	\$16,200.00

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS: FACILITIES – APPROVAL OF CHANGE ORDER TO INCLUDE HVAC REPAIRS IN COURTHOUSE PROJECT

Assistant County Manager, Gene Hodges, reported that on June 1, 2020, the Craven County Board of Commissioners approved a contract with Barnhill Contracting Company for repairs to the Courthouse/Emergency Services/Information Technology Facility (Courthouse). This initial contract was for \$1,280,453 to replace and repair the critical building systems that were damaged during Hurricane Florence. As explained at that time, the initial contract did not include the pricing for the repairs to the chiller and air handler components of the HVAC system that services the 1st floor. At that time, staff explained that it had been decided to bid out the permanent repair work of these components versus installation of portable/temporary systems. The pricing for this permanent repair work has come in at \$666,037:

Construction Costs and CM@R Fees: \$666,037
 Contingency (5% of construction costs): \$ 34,000
 Total \$700,037

Mr. Hodges requested that the Board approve a project ordinance amendment and associated budget amendment in the amount of \$700,037 to fund this project and to authorize the County Manager to execute the change order with Barnhill Contracting to include the HVAC repairs in the Courthouse project.

Commissioner Mitchell motioned to approve the project ordinance and budget amendment and to authorize the County Manager to execute the change order with Barnhill Contracting, as requested, seconded by Commissioner McCabe and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

**Courthouse EOC Recovery Project
Fund 415
Update**

This ordinance is hereby approved in the following amount for expenditure of the Courthouse EOC Recovery Project

Expenditures:

Architectural/Engineering Design Services	\$ 550,000.00
Construction	\$1,946,490.00
Contingency	\$ 98,000.00

TOTAL \$2,594,490.00

The following revenues are hereby estimated for the Courthouse EOC Recovery Project

Revenues;

Transfer from General Fund	\$2,594,490.00
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TOTAL \$2,594,490.00

Facilities

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
4154200-39801	\$700,037.00	4154200-47659	\$ 34,000.00
Transfer to General fund		Construction Contingency	
		4154200-47301	\$666,037.00
		Construction General	
TOTAL	\$700,037.00	TOTAL	\$700,037.00

**DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS: HUMAN RESOURCES – OPIOID PROGRAM
COMMUNITY OUTREACH BUDGET AMENDMENT**

Human Resources Director, Amber Parker, presented a budget amendment requesting to roll over funds budgeted in FY 2019 -2020 to pay for the Opioid Program Community Outreach advertising costs for ads on CARTS vans. She stated that ads were completed near the end of FY 2019-2020 but invoices were not submitted for processing in time to meet the FY 2019-2020 year-end cutoff and they will need to be paid in FY 2020 - 2021.

Commissioner Liner inquired about what type of outreach activities have been conducted by the Opioid Program and the status of a decision to form a committee to provide guidance.

Ms. Parker provided a report on the hiring of Jasmine Canady, her training, and the marketing tools she has implemented, while being socially restricted due to COVID 19. Ms. Parker highlighted the creation of brochures, thirty second radio ads, a billboard on Hwy. 70 East, social media targeting, and the use of ads on the CARTS vehicles that Ms. Canady has utilized in her tenure. Ms. Parker also remarked on the various partnerships and coalitions that Ms. Canady has established; mentioning she serves on the Board for RealizeU252.

County Manager, Jack Veit, indicated that forming a committee has been delayed because of COVID19 restrictions.

Commissioner Liner motioned to approve the budget amendment, as requested, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

Human Resources

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1010000-39901 Fund Balance	\$14,400.00	1014130-42702 Community Outreach	\$14,400.00
TOTAL	\$14,400.00	TOTAL	\$14,400.00

APPOINTMENTS*Pending Appointments*

Chairman Mark reviewed the following pending appointments:

- Adult Care Home Advisory Committee
- Nursing Home Advisory Committee
- Regional Aging Advisory Board
- Senior Legislative Tarheel Alternate
- Coastal Carolina Regional Airport Authority
- Craven County ABC Board
- Fireman's Relief Fund Board of Trustees

*Current Appointments**Fire Tax Commissioners*

Commissioner Jones motioned to reappoint Otto Simmons, Twp. 8 WNB Rhems. There being no additional nominations, Mr. Simmons was reappointed by acclamation.

Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council

Commissioner Limer motioned to reappoint Nicholas Salter and Doug Furgason; Commissioner Mitchell motioned to reappoint Mark Dail and Jean Matthews. There being no additional nominations, Mr. Salter, Mr. Fergason, Mr. Dail and Ms. Matthews were reappointed by acclamation.

Craven Community Child Protection Team

Chairman Mark motioned to reappoint Debbie Hodges. There being no additional nominations, Ms. Hodges was reappointed by acclamation.

Craven County ABC Board

Commissioner Jones requested that Carol Crayton be reappointed. There being no additional nominations, Ms. Crayton was reappointed by acclamation.

Upcoming Appointments

Chairman Mark reviewed the following upcoming appointments due to expire in September.

- River Bend Planning Board – Kelly Forrest, District 4
- Voluntary Agriculture District Advisory Board – Larry Paul, District 6, unable to continue serving
- Nursing Home Advisory Committee – Linda Lelli, District 1
- Adult Care Home Advisory Committee – Nancy Verzier

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Final Offer to Purchase Real Property – Tax Parcel Number 5-004-042 (No Assigned Street Address)

County Attorney, Arey Grady, presented an offer previously received and tentatively approved by Craven County in the amount of \$1,800.00 for this property, which was acquired through a tax foreclosure. The total taxes and costs that were foreclosed were \$1,812.21. The current tax value is \$4,680.00. The offer was advertised, and there were no upset bids, the final bid being \$1,800.00.

Commissioner Liner motioned to adopt the following resolution accepting the final sale, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved unanimously.

RESOLUTION

New Bern, North Carolina

Tax Parcel Number 5-004-042

THAT WHEREAS, Craven County has received an offer to purchase a parcel of property owned by the County, identified as Tax Parcel Number 5-004-042 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 for the sum of \$1,800.00 by Rayshawn Johnson and Alexandra A. Boyd; 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 Rayshawn Johnson and Alexandra A. Boyd in the sum of \$1,800.00 for said parcel identified as Tax Parcel Number 5-004-042, 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 purchaser 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 3534, Page 2100 in the Craven County Registry. This property is also commonly referred to by its tax parcel identification number which is 5-004-042.

ADOPTED THIS 6th DAY OF AUGUST, 2020.

*Final Offer to Purchase Real Property – 2203 Chestnut Ave., New Bern
(Parcel Number 8-037-001)*

Mr. Grady presented an offer previously received and tentatively approved by Craven County in the amount of \$375.00 for this property, which was acquired through a tax foreclosure. The total taxes and costs that were foreclosed were \$4,179.83. The current tax value is \$750.00. This offer was advertised and there were no upset bids, the final bid being \$375.00.

Commissioner Mitchell motioned to adopt the following resolution accepting the final sale, seconded by Commissioner Liner and approved unanimously.

RESOLUTION

2203 Chestnut Avenue, New Bern, North Carolina

Tax Parcel Number 8-037-001

THAT WHEREAS, Craven County has received an offer to purchase a parcel of property owned by the County, identified as Tax Parcel Number 8-037-001, 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 for the sum of \$375.00 by JK Investments Holdings, 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 JK Investments Holdings, LLC in the sum of \$375.00 for said parcel identified as Tax Parcel Number 8-037-001, 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 purchaser 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 Eight (8) Township, Craven County, North Carolina, and being more particularly described as follows:

All of that certain property more fully described in Deed Book 3569, Page 529 in the Craven County Registry. This property is also commonly referred to by its tax parcel identification number which is 8-037-001.

ADOPTED THIS 6th DAY OF AUGUST, 2020.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

County Manager, Jack Veit, expressed gratitude to County Staff that worked Monday night and Tuesday during Tropical Storm Isaias. He recounted that many employees worked to clean up vegetative debris, dealt with power outages, the involvement of DSS staff, Health staff and Sheriff staff to open three shelters. Mr. Veit recognized Stanley Kite, Ira Whitford, and Patti McDaniel for their commitment during these events; highlighting that due to the pandemic, EOC staffing was conducted remotely in four different sites successfully.

Mr. Veit reminded the Board that the NC Association of County Commissioners Annual Conference is ongoing now through Saturday, August 8th, remotely, and encouraged Commissioners to log in and check it out.

Mr. Veit reported that upon adopting the CARES Act, the County has communicated with each of the municipalities, fire and rescue organizations, and non-profits to inform them of the funds and the process.

Chairman Mark thanked the County Manager and staff for working during Tropical Storm Isaias and acknowledged the IT department for setting it up remotely, so that the Commissioners were able to see what was going on from each area of the County.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Chairman Mark read from a statement regarding the meeting held with the Board of Education, along with Commissioners Jones and Liner earlier in the day. It expressed the concern over loss of instruction and personal time with the students after the recent decision by the BOE to go to remote learning for the first nine weeks. He advocated for in person instruction as soon as possible, referring to special needs and at risk students, and the lack of connectivity for many throughout Craven County.

Commissioner Bucher referenced employees at major industries, County employees, police, firefighters and others who have continued to work throughout the pandemic, while the Board of Education has decided to shutter 25 schools and conduct online learning only. He encouraged the public to pay attention to who serves on that Board and make changes when elections occur in November. Mr. Bucher remarked he had communicated directly with the Chairperson of the BOE about their decision. He relayed that 7,877 people died every day in the United States during 2019 for various reasons; and we are all going to die, but the reality is that life goes on. Mr. Bucher expressed his frustration at the Governor for continuing to impose restrictions for five more weeks, stating that politics are driving decisions.

Commissioner Mitchell stated she would like to see a comparison between what Craven County and other eastern NC counties are doing in regards to educating their children. Mrs. Mitchell highlighted the difficulty for parents being able to go to work, while also having to be responsible for educating their children; creating not only an educational impact, but an economical one too. She expressed that there are other options available and the Board of Education did not adopt an optimal solution.

Commissioner Liner reported that the regional library board is putting in for an \$80,000 grant for IT and hotspot equipment for areas needing connectivity. He thanked the management team and County workers for all that they do.

Commissioner Liner then reflected on the budget process and commented on issues and concerns he has with how the Sheriff's Office conducts budget requests; indicating it puts the County Manager in a difficult position.

Commissioner McCabe recognized the accomplishments of civil rights leader, John Lewis, and his connection with him. He relayed he had been interviewed by the newspaper and a local TV

station; and had people reach out to him regarding those. Mr. McCabe expressed hope of finding another icon like John Lewis.

Commissioner Sampson stated we are living in critical times. He remarked that he has been in the fight a long time and referenced racial activities he was aware of when he was young and his efforts at trying to make difference. Mr. Sampson read from a statement written by his wife, Ethel Sampson, about the civil rights movements in which they participated in around New Bern, attending a national convention in Atlanta, GA with many civil rights leaders such as Martin Luther King and Andrew Young, and marching at the US Capitol in 1963 where they heard speeches by MLK and John Lewis. Commissioner Sampson expressed discouragement at the number of people who have no place to live and no food to eat, and who lack the ability to participate in online learning. He pronounced that the poor and black people are the last to get help based on the continuing power structure. He reflected on the difficult decisions that are having to be made during this pandemic and the people being hurt by those decisions. He concluded by saying we have to do the best we can for all people and pray over decisions.

Commissioner Jones provided some background on why he, Commissioner Liner and Chairman Mark met with the Board of Education leadership, stating it was on behalf of their constituents who have made their opinions known. He commented on how the internet service in Craven County is not working well, as 10% of students (1300 students) have no access to the internet, which constrains their ability to participate in online learning. Mr. Jones stressed that there are a lot of students who are going to be left behind because of the Board of Education's decision and this issue. He expressed concern over wanting everyone to be safe, but stated a decision needs to be made that will provide everyone with an education. Mr. Jones remarked on how many educational days have been lost already as a result of Hurricane Florence and the pandemic. He referred to a *Sun Journal* article written by Tom Campbell, who interviewed former Superior Court Judge Howdy Manning, who stated: "Let's start with the children. They are the ones we are losing, because we aren't teaching them to read and do basic math. If they don't get it by third grade, they won't ever catch up; our primary effort needs to be pre-K to grade three." Mr. Jones emphasized that we cannot wait and continue to sit idle for this virus to leave, as our young people need an education; and we need to stand up for those who lack access to education because of no internet access. He thanked Dr. Greg Murphy for his wisdom and being an advocate for schools reopening. Mr. Jones indicated his comments are his opinion, on behalf of his constituents, and he stands up for these children who are not getting educated. He advocates for the BOE to go back to the drawing table and come up with other options so that all children, black, Hispanic, and white, can receive equal access to the education they deserve.

Commissioner Jones, Chairman Mark, and County Manager, Jack Veit, reported on their phone meeting with a Senior Vice President of Century Link regarding the lack of internet services in parts of the County. There are approximately 696 homes without fiber. The end result was that Century Link indicated this is a business decision and unless the federal government comes up with funds, they will not be doing anything to improve the internet service. A discussion ensued about this being an infrastructure problem and the need for the County to make capital investments towards creating its own infrastructure. The secondary problem of how the lack of connectivity affects the County's water system was also highlighted.

Chairman Mark pointed out that Craven Community College is conducting 18% of its classes face to face and does not see why Craven County Schools could not also offer face-to-face instruction with necessary precautions in place. He stated he does not think we can afford to let our children go without learning until 2021. Mr. Mark also stated that the Sheriff is to call the County Manager regarding requests prior to calling him going forward.

At 9:20 p.m., Commissioner McCabe motioned to adjourn. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved unanimously.

Chairman Thomas F. Mark
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Nan Holton
Clerk to the Board