

## **February 28, 2019 – Work Session**

The Swain County Board of Commissioners held a Work Session on February 28, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. Present were Chairman Bushyhead, Vice-Chair Burns, Commissioner Parton, Commissioner Parsons and Commissioner Seagle.

Joe “Gunner” Vasquez led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Bushyhead called the regular session to order.

### **Items for Discussion:**

#### **Department Reports**

-Board of Elections: Joanie Weeks relayed there is no board at this time. The State Board has a meeting scheduled for Monday and will appoint 5 rather than 4 this time to fill 3 democrat and 2 republican seats. The Governor will pick the chairman.

-Soil & Water Conservation: Creeden Kowal presented the 2018 annual report and district highlights including; the current operating funding source is NCDA & CS Division of Soil and Water expending \$40,291, \$268,800 is the requested grant amount with \$66,80 secured, the best management practices installed in 2018 were 4,694 feet of livestock exclusion fencing, 3 watering tanks, pasture renovation, spring development, heavy use areas, manure spreader, 328 feet of agricultural road stabilization and 45 feet of guttering. Ms. Kowal also noted their 2019 focus will be the 2020-2025 long range plan, summer internship program, Swain FFA barn construction, volunteering at the North American Envirothon, 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Swain County Agricultural Fair, Swain County Agricultural Event Center and Shelby’s NC Environmental Education Certification.

-Swain County Agricultural Fair Updates: Kendra Fortner shared the following highlights: The mission statement is to plan, promote, and execute an annual county fair that celebrates agriculture and its history in Swain County through local food, craft vendors, live entertainment, competitions, 4-H youth livestock shows, agricultural exhibits and showcasing youth talent, committee members are Rob Hawk, Kendra Fortner, Christine Bredenkamp, Jen Hill, Dee Decker, Patti Jo Taylor, Creeden Kowal, Shelby Cook, Toby Sorrell and Karen Wilmont. Ms. Fortner relayed total secured sponsorship was \$8,800.00, total expenditures were \$7,087.51, 22 participants in livestock shows, 75-art and sewing exhibits, 8 horticultural exhibits, 12 educational booths, 4 food trucks, 4 craft vendors and around 500 visitors. The 2019 focus is increasing shows, exhibits and vendor participation, securing funding for Swain County Agricultural Event Center and bathrooms, introducing traditional fair games, establishing annual sponsors and becoming more fiscally sustainable. The next event is scheduled for August 17, 2019 12:00 pm until 6:00 pm

-Health Department update on Board of Commissioners’ Handbook/Accreditation Training: Alison Cochran discussed the Swain County Human Services Organizational Chart for the Health Department, and reviewed the Health and Human Services Advisory Board Members. Mrs. Cochran noted the following mission of the Swain County Health Department is to promote, protect and enhance the health and wellness of our community and the environment and the vision is to build a healthy future for all people thru best practices in public health. A copy of the Health Department’s brochure was distributed noting clinical services offer, children’s services, community services as well as location and contact information. Mrs. Cochran then went over the roles and responsibilities of board of health related to North Carolina Local Health Department Accreditation (NCLHDA) including the purpose of accreditation, identification of activities related to board of health involvement basic components of the process, activities and scoring requirements, the life cycle of accreditation, purpose of the NCLHDA Program, benefits of accreditation, the law as required in Senate Bill 804, the Board’s role to ensure they have required policies, procedures or materials, hear or review LHD reports, discuss service costs, need for new/amended rules or ordinances, approve fees and budgets and take other actions or be involved with efforts to assure the health department has what it needs to do its job, and review financial reports.

Mrs. Cochran relayed an example of benchmark #22 only consisting of 3 items, but takes months to complete. Commissioner Parton asked if surrounding counties were bucking on accreditation and asked what it would take to do away with this time consuming process. Mrs. Cochran noted

she's attending the Health Director's Meeting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday in March and would see what other counties think about the process and informed him the Senate rule would have to be changed.

**Public Comments:** Brenda Donargo gave an update on the complaint filed against John Herrin, Chairman of the Swain County Board of Elections, regarding inappropriate things posted on Facebook during the election. The complaint was filed with the State Board of Elections and the attorney responded this item is on the back burner and if Mr. Herrin's not appointed back on the Swain BOE, it will be dropped but if he is, they will proceed with the process.

**County Managers Report:** Kevin King discussed the following:

- Met with WCU, Department of Commerce and Heath Shuler as options for assistance with strategic planning. A survey will be initiated to come up with 5 goals and a timeline.
- An agreement with the Tuckasee Water and Sewer Authority is in place, seeking a grant for the Ela Community to install a lift station.
- The need for a temporary part time swimming pool inspector which would free up the environmental health inspectors during opening season and consideration of a \$250.00 fee per pool inspection
- The Tourism Development Authority needs a new lift to put up Christmas decorations on light poles, etc. The TDA currently pays \$12,000/year to do so. A new bucket truck is being considered and the County would be able to also use it.
- TDA is seeking storage space. Soil/Water Conservation has a shed they could possibly use and replace with a new one at the location they were planning to move the existing one to.
- Met with President Don Thomas, Southwestern Community College, seeking a plan of action to resolve noise produced by classes in the gym at the Almond Center creating disturbances for an office close by
- Budget requests are due April 1, 2019. Mr. King met with department heads individually last week. The personnel committee meets tomorrow.
- Renovations at the courthouse are going well. Phase 1 almost completed. Building/Grounds will pull off in a couple weeks until phase 2.
- Mr. King commended the Emergency Management team for their assistance with the Ela Dam issue.
- Information is included in the meeting packets regarding Tax issues for Darrell Watts and Carolyn Slawter for your review and consideration at the next meeting.

### **Commissioners Items**

Commissioner Parsons attended the DSS supervisor's meeting, Congregations for Children (C4C) learning the importance of literacy by 3<sup>rd</sup> grade

Vice-Chair Burns attended the Library Committee meeting/spreading the word throughout the community of fundraising efforts, etc., met with the Broadband Committee, invited the Board to attend a Closing the Digital Divide 101 for Local and State Elected Officials Workshop in Charlotte April 1, 2019

Commissioner Seagle gave an update on landslides in the area

Chairman Bushyhead relayed he sent a letter to NC Department of Transportation thanking them for being on top of the landslides, etc. during all the rain we've had in Swain County.

**Informal Discussion:** Sheriff Curtis Cochran gave an update on the lockdown at Swain Middle School today noting a loaded hand gun was found in the student's restroom, all security measures were taken and all students, staff and parents followed along accordingly.

**Public Comments:** Brenda Donargo gave an update on the complaint filed against John Herrin regarding the Swain County Board of Elections

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss at this time, Commissioner Parsons made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Seagle seconded the motion. A vote was unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindi C. Woodard,  
Clerk to the Board  
Swain County Commissioners

Ben Bushyhead,  
Chairman  
Swain County Commissioners