

*Kevin Austin, Chairman of Board
David Moxley, Vice Chairman
Cliff Collins, Commissioner
Marion Welborn, Commissioner
Frank Zachary, Commissioner*



*Ed Powell, County Attorney
Lisa Hughes, County Manager
Tanya Gentry, Clerk to the Board*

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

November 3, 2023

Charters of Freedom

Ron Lewis and the contractor with Foundation Forward, Inc. met with Dwayne Stanley and me this week to discuss the placement and construction of the Charters of Freedom. The monuments will include the United States Constitution, Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. I discussed with them about building (at our expense) and additional pedestal for the Sanctity of Life Resolution the Board approved several years ago. They said that would not be an issue. The next step will be sending them an updated Letter of Intent that includes the specific location, which will be the courtyard at the Courthouse. Other than the additional pedestal and any potential sidewalk improvements, this project will not be built at the County's expense. Foundation Forward, Inc. has secured funding from the General Assembly.

Joint Legislative Commission

The State has had the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations since 1975 to provide legislative review of State government implementation of public policies and the expenditures of local governments. Several years ago, the requirement of local governments to submit letters of intent when borrowing money for capital projects. This Commission has 42 members, with 21 appointments being made by the Speaker of the House and 21 by the President pro tempore of the Senate.

The state budget, which still awaits certification, expands the reach of the Commission's investigative authority to include local governments, public authorities and many private entities that contract with the local governments. This means that the Commission has the authority to investigate any local government funds and the entities who have received them by any means (grants, appropriations, donations, etc.), i.e. vendors, non-profits and anyone else the County provides money or funding.

Under the new law, the Commission or a subcommittee of the Commission may "study the efficiency, economy and effectiveness" of any local unit and "evaluate the implementation of public policies". Again, this also applies to any entity the County provides funds, purchases from or contracts with.

The Commission may contact any official or staff member of a local unit to appear before it and testify about any issue within its authority. The local unit must give the Commission and/or its staff access to any building owned or leased by it. The Commission may compel

access to any document or system held by the local unit (subject to confidentiality provisions).

Most of the Commission's work is protected as confidential. The law further provides that an officer or employee of a local unit may not disclose to anyone else (including other officials or employees of the local unit).

The new law makes it a Class 2 Misdemeanor for a person to conceal, falsify or refuse to provide the Commission any document, information or access to any building or facility with the intent to mislead, impede or interfere with the Commission's work.

The NCACC Board discussed this at its last meeting and Kara Millonzi with the School of Government have voiced concerns that this new legislation is overreaching, as it has the potential to impact private vendors.

Broadband

Zirrus has begun the design work for the extension of fiber project, in which they have received the GREAT Grant to build. They are the only fiber provider who applied for the GREAT Grant and included the County as its partner. Brightspeed, Spectrum and Surry Communications are other broadband providers within the county.

Upcoming Dates

Viewing of "The Veteran's Battlefield", A Story of North Carolina Veterans at the Willingham Theater on **Thursday, November 9th** at 7pm. The Veterans' Day Event will be held **November 11th at 11am** at the Veterans' Memorial at the County Park.

Community meetings for Strategic Planning will be held **Tuesday, November 14th** at Starmount High School and on **Tuesday, November 28th** at Forbush High School. Both of these meetings will start at **7pm**. The purpose is to gather information for the Board's consideration and to offer those in attendance an opportunity to complete the survey online if they have not. Staff would bring 2-3 laptops for their use.

The Annual Christmas Employee Luncheon will be held on **Friday, December 22nd, 12noon-2pm** in the Banquet Room at the Agricultural & Educational Building. County offices will be **closed the remainder of the afternoon**, as well as **December 25, 26 and 27**. County offices will be closed January 1.