



THE RANDOLPH RECAP

SEPTEMBER 6, 2022

COMMISSIONER MEETING AGENDA SUMMARY

AGENDA ITEMS:

- Public Comment
- Farm, Food and Family Education Center
- Consider Workforce Initiative Grant
- Veterans Services - Operation Greenlight, PACT Act
- I-74 Industrial Economic Development Project
- Fire Tax Districts
- Fire Marshal's Updated Fee Schedule
- Seagrove-Ulah Waste Water Treatment Plant
- Transfer ARPA Revenue Loss Allocation
- Randleman VIPER Tower Project Funding and Public Health Renovations



Critical issues facing our community and county government have never been greater as we progress in the 3rd decade of the 21st Century. The Randolph County Board of Commissioners holds regular public meetings on the first Monday of each month, beginning at 6:00 pm, in the 2nd Floor Meeting Room at the Historic Courthouse, 145 Worth Street, Asheboro, N.C. At each meeting, issues impacting our county and citizens are presented and evaluated by the County Commissioners.

Randolph County government is committed to providing citizens with the opportunity to access information and obtain the latest news and public updates regarding the county and its government. The Randolph Recap is a new addition to the Randolph County web page. It will provide monthly highlights and summaries from County Commissioner meetings. It will also highlight information on current issues facing the County Commissioners and the Departments and agencies of Randolph County government. The Randolph-Recap will serve as one of the various communication outlets, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and print media, that will update and communicate with our Randolph County citizens.

We hope the Randolph Recap is helpful to you and would appreciate your input and comments as we move forward.



Hal Johnson
Randolph County Manager



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Public Comment

- Dwain Roberts, Commander, Sons of Confederate Veterans, spoke about a recent memorial service held in June. **"I've not had a chance to say thank you. It was a wonderful, nice, service,"** said Roberts.
- Judy Saunders, Randolph County resident, spoke in reference to the most recent election **"the state has requirements and guidelines that are to be followed by those working at elections. Every effort is made to protect the vote,"** said Saunders.
- Franklin Suggs, Randolph County resident, spoke regarding the Board of Commissioner's vote in March to leave the statue located on the historic courthouse lawn. Mr. Suggs shared that many other memorials have been removed only after multiple votes by governing boards. **"I dispute the assertion by this board that voting to leave the memorial as is, where it is, constitutes taking action. Inaction is not action,"** said Suggs.

Public Comment

- Faye Cox, Randolph County resident, shared concerns about new properties being developed near her home, and how they are affecting nearby water sources. **"What worries me is water, there are so many developments in our area. Our creeks, ponds, and Mill Creek River are all low. It really concerns me and should concern everyone,"** said Cox.
- Tim Saunders, Randolph County resident, shared concerns over youth violence in the area. **"I understand the opinion on the 2nd amendment. But these kids are getting guns from their parents. We should hold parents responsible. As a county, state, and society we can't put up with this. It is way too important,"** said Saunders.
- Pastor James Pemberton, Randolph County citizen, shared concerns over the Board of Commissioners' decision to leave the statue located on the historic courthouse lawn. **"We are all supposed to be brothers and sisters. We should all live and be together as one. We should be able to come together, sit down and talk this thing through. This problem will not go away,"** said Pemberton. Mr. Pemberton urged commissioners to consider an approach where everyone comes together to make a decision that works for everyone.
- Jane Gant, Randolph County citizen, spoke regarding the Commissioners' vote in March to leave the Confederate statue located on the historic courthouse lawn. **"We are not asking for the destruction of that monument. We are only asking that it be placed somewhere that does and will not offend people. We are asking that you form a bipartisan committee to look at an alternate place where it can be displayed,"** said Gant.



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Farm, Food, and Family Education Center

Kristen Hess, HH Architecture, provided an update on the Farm, Food, and Family Education Center to the Board of Commissioners at the September meeting. The Opinion of Probable Cost after the schematic design phase is \$29,323,508. The design development phase is scheduled to begin on September 12, 2022, and will last 12 weeks. \$28.3M in secured funding comes from the following sources:

- \$18.4M allocated funds from NC State Budget Process
- \$5M Randolph County Capital Reserve Allocation
- \$900,000 NC Commerce Department Rural Transformation Grant
- \$4M Randolph Electric USDA 1% Interest Loan (10-Year Repayment)

“The idea is that we would be opening in the first quarter of 2025,” shared Hess.

“A lot of work has gone into this. A lot of different folks have contributed and we appreciate what they’ve done. From my standpoint, on a month-to-month basis, it seems like we are making slow progress. But, when we look at where we were a year ago we’ve made leaps and bounds. We’re excited about this and the funding is almost there,” said Vice-Chairman Allen.

“Thank you to the Commissioners for your continued support and thank you to our state representatives and folks that helped get that money in the budget, and getting us jumpstarted on this. We appreciate all the support,” said Kenneth Sherin, Cooperative Extension Director.



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Workforce Initiative Grant

In 2018, Randolph County's education and workforce entities were invited to participate in the Eastern Triad Workforce Initiative (ETWI) grant, a workforce initiative to grow and support apprenticeship opportunities in the region. ETWI is comprised of four counties: Guilford, Alamance, Randolph, and Rockingham. This year, each county will directly receive the grant funds rather than funds being distributed through the lead county. This provides the ability to reduce administrative costs and put more resources to support the County's education and workforce needs. Randolph County's share of the ETWI appropriation in the State budget for the 2023-24 fiscal year is \$750K.

County partners in this initiative include Randolph Community College (RCC), Asheboro City Schools, Randolph County School System, and the Regional Partnership Workforce Development Board. Allotted funds will support the Apprenticeship Randolph efforts, including a dedicated position, marketing and recruitment efforts, startup of career/workforce academies at local high schools, training RCC instructors, and equipment costs.

"As you well know, we are on the verge of such economic growth in this county, and what a privilege it is to have these funds and be able to address some of these needs. ETWI funds are really meant to help us address workforce needs and any gaps or areas that we can grow. Ultimately, our goal is to provide a trained workforce to meet industry needs," explained Suzanne Rohrbaugh, Vice President for Instructional Services, Randolph Community College.

The Board of Commissioners voted to accept the \$750k state grant, authorize the chairman to sign the related documentation, and approve a resolution to establish the Workforce Initiative Fund containing the proposed budget allocation by agency.



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Veterans Services- Operation Greenlight & PACT Act

In advance of the upcoming Veterans Day holiday, Randolph County has announced that select county buildings will be illuminated green November 7-13 as part of the Operation Green Light initiative of the National Association of Counties to support military veterans, as well as raise awareness about the unique challenges faced by many veterans and the resources available at the county, state, and federal level to assist veterans and their families. Veteran Services Director, Chad Gurley, provided an update to the Board of Commissioners about Operation Greenlight and the historic passing of veteran legislation known as the PACT Act.

“The intent of Operation Greenlight is to send a clear message to inspire veterans to reach out to their county veteran service officers. Randolph County Commissioners seek to endorse that action at tonight’s meeting, as well as honor all veteran families in this county. I encourage Veterans and their dependents who reside in Randolph County to call the Veterans Services office for any type of assistance,” said Chad Gurley, Veterans Services Director.

The PACT Act is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. According to the US Department of Veteran Affairs [website](#), **“the law helps us provide generations of Veterans Affairs – and their survivors – with the care and benefits they’ve earned and deserve.”** The PACT Act addresses the following areas:

- Expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and Veterans of the Vietnam, Gulf War, and post-9/11 eras
- Adds more than 20 new presumptive conditions for burn pits and other toxic exposures
- Adds more presumptive-exposure locations for Agent Orange and radiation
- Requires VA to provide a toxic exposure screening to every Veteran enrolled in VA health care
- Helps improve research, staff education, and treatment related to toxic exposures

“This bill is a bipartisan effort to expand coverage treatments and resources to sick veterans and others who were impacted by the toxins due to service in the United States military,” said Gurley.

The Board of Commissioners voted to adopt the Operation Green Light Resolution.



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I-74 Industrial Development Project

The I-74 Industrial Center is a 160-acre site to be developed into an industrial park. The property is located at the interchange of I-74 and Hwy. 311 in Sophia. The Randolph County EDC has been working with a private developer, Randolph County, the City of Randleman, and the City of Asheboro on providing infrastructure to support the future industrial park. Water will be extended to the site by the City of Randleman, while the City of Asheboro has agreed to provide sewer capacity. Other infrastructure needs are to align Wall Brothers Road for improved truck traffic access.

The County has retained the Wooten Group for engineering services to design a sewer extension to the site. The City of Randleman will provide the water line. Randolph County applied for a grant from the NC Industrial Development Fund and has been awarded \$1M for this project. A public hearing was held to consider the County's purchase of two lots, totaling approximately 30 acres, at the I-74 Industrial Center property.

Lynn Small, Randolph County resident, spoke during the public hearing and asked commissioners to ensure that future inhabitants of the I-74 Industrial Center property be required to pay fire and property taxes.

"I do not want to see corporations brought in who are allowed to forego fire or property taxes. This site should be developed with full taxes being paid by incoming companies," said Small. Mr. Small also shared concerns over tractor trailers entering the residential and school district areas near the site.

The Board of Commissioners adopted a resolution to authorize the purchase and development of approximately 30 acres to establish the I-74 Industrial Center, and adopt project amendments for the Economic Development Reserve and Site Development Capital Project to move \$1.1M for land purchase and the cost of the DOT Study.

The Board of Commissioners voted to adopt the resolution to submit a grant application for the NC Industrial Development Fund, to administer the grant in accordance with rules and regulations, and authorized the Chairman to sign the Industrial Development Fund grant documentation.

The Board of Commissioners voted to approve a project amendment in Coronavirus Recovery Fund, to remove the previous allocation for engineering costs, authorize the transfer of \$5,862,800 from restricted ARPA funds, and adopt the project ordinance to establish the I-74 Industrial Center Sewer Capital Project Fund.

"Economic Development and a lot of partners have been working really hard on putting this project together and getting us moving forward on a marketable site that is ready to go. I am excited to get moving on it. There are a lot of moving parts to this project. There are different municipalities working together on this to get something marketable. Those three actions are a major step forward for Randolph County. Thank you to the EDC," said Commissioner Kidd.

"This has been a team effort right from the beginning and we would not be here tonight taking up this matter of business if it were not for the groundwork that has been laid over the past three years to get us to this point," said Chairman Frye.



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Resolutions for Fire Tax Districts

Many Randolph County fire protection tax districts have a fifteen-cent cap on the tax rate. At the July meeting, commissioners officially considered abolishing the currently capped county service districts for fire protection for East Side, Level Cross, Randleman-Sophia, and Tabernacle and replacing them with districts that do not have that limitation on taxation. The proposed new service districts contain the same properties currently contained in the capped districts for those areas. For each district, the Board determined that the current cap on taxation has rendered or will soon render the district obsolete for providing the necessary protection to citizens in the area. Commissioners passed resolutions, respectively, declaring intent to create the proposed districts and calling for a report to be prepared for each district in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes. These resolutions also set public hearings on the creation of these districts for 6 pm, on September 6, 2022.

- A public hearing was held to consider the abolishment of the current district and the creation of a new uncapped district for the East Side.

Faye Cox, Randolph County citizen, shared concerns over paying additional tax. **“I can’t complain about the service. The only problem we all have is money. We don’t want to pay higher fire tax,”** said Cox. Mr. Frye explained that removing the cap does not mean that tax rates will automatically increase.

The Board of Commissioners approved a resolution abolishing the current fifteen-cent capped East Side fire protection county service district and creating a new service district without the cap.

- A public hearing was held to consider the abolishment of the current district and the creation of a new uncapped district for Level Cross.

Martha Patterson, Randolph County resident, encouraged commissioners to remove the cap **“The fire department deserves much more of anything that can be given to them. They do an excellent job of providing service to the Level Cross citizens,”** said Patterson.

The Board of Commissioners approved a resolution abolishing the current fifteen-cent capped Level Cross fire protection county service district and creating a new service district without the cap.



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Resolutions for Fire Tax Districts

- A public hearing was held to consider the abolishment of the current district and the creation of a new uncapped district for Randleman.

Lynn Small, Randolph County resident, shared concerns over who would pay additional costs to support the industrial site. **“I think we are getting good service in the Randleman district, I am pleased with it. My main issue is who is going to pay the cost of the upgrading for this industrial site?”** asked Mr. Small.

“We have no governance over the fire departments. We contract with them to provide fire service. They run their own departments, buy their own equipment, and hire their own staff. But, they have to come here before they can raise taxes. The process remains the same. They do not have taxing authority,” explained Chairman Frye.

The Board of Commissioners approved a resolution abolishing the current fifteen-cent capped Randleman-Sophia fire protection county service district and creating a new service district without the cap.

- A public hearing was held to consider the abolishment of the current district and the creation of a new uncapped district for Tabernacle.

No speakers came forward.

The Board of Commissioners approved a resolution abolishing the current fifteen-cent capped Tabernacle fire protection county service district and creating a new service district without the cap.



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Updated Fee Schedule

Since its inception in the early 1990's the Fire Marshal's Office has provided permit, consultation, plan review, and special inspection services free of charge to contractors and the like. Randolph County is one of the few counties in the state that does not charge for this service. With the ever-increasing demand for these services, the Fire Marshal's office requested that the Board approve the adoption of a fee schedule, to be effective Jan 1, 2023. There will continue to be no charge for annual facility inspections.

"We have tried to come up with a simple, straightforward fee schedule, that will help the County recoup some of the cost of providing these specialized services," said Erik Beard, Fire Marshall.

The Board of Commissioners voted to adopt the Fire Inspection Fee Schedule as presented, to take effect January 1, 2023.

Seagrove-Ulah Waste Water Treatment Plant Capital Project

Commissioners previously authorized the engineering work to design upgrades to the Seagrove-Ulah Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP). The County received a \$2.5M state grant for water and sewer projects. This grant runs through the Department of Environmental Quality.

The Board of Commissioners voted to accept the \$2.5M DEQ grant, designate the grant for the Seagrove-Ulah WWTP improvement project, and authorize the Assistant County Manager/Finance Officer as the authorized representative for the DEQ grant.

The Board of Commissioners voted to approve the project amendment for Coronavirus Recovery Fund to remove the previous allocation for engineering costs and adopt the capital project ordinance to establish the Seagrove-Ulah WWTP Capital Project Fund.

Seagrove-Ulah WWTP Design Addendum – Paxton Arthurs, County Engineer, updated the Board of Commissioners on the current state of the Seagrove-Ulah WWTP project. In June, the Board awarded a contract to LKC Engineering for the design, bidding, and construction administration for the expansion to Seagrove-Ulah WWTP. Since that time, there has been some discussion on steps that could be taken to address some sewer capacity issues to enable upcoming development projects to move forward on schedule until the new WWTP is complete and operational.



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Randleman VIPER Tower Project Funding and Public Health Renovations

Emergency Services Chief, Donovan Davis, has discussed the need for an Emergency Services communication tower in the Providence Grove area. Emergency Services would like to move forward with a consultant to move the project forward. In addition, the Public Health clinic and office area will be renovated soon. It is recommended that another \$2M be set aside for construction costs and to establish a capital project to account for it.

The Board of Commissioners approved the general fund budget amendment to add funding to Emergency Services, transfer funding to the Health facility renovation capital project fund, and adopt the Health Facility Renovation Capital Project ordinance.

Budget Amendment to Transfer ARPA Revenue Loss Allocation

The American Rescue Plan Act established significant funding to respond to the negative economic effects of the pandemic. Part of this federal assistance was in the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund. Randolph County received \$27,905,631. The use of these funds is subject to restrictive federal laws and guidelines.

Of Randolph County's share, \$500k has been committed to public safety merit pay, and \$600k has been committed to the purchase of two new ambulances. This leaves \$8.9M remaining.

The board voted to designate the revenue loss portion of ARPA funds to be used for the general fund salaries and fringe benefits and also to approve the budget amendments for the general fund and the Coronavirus Recovery fund to transfer the remaining \$8.9M to the general fund.