

PERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEMBERS PRESENT

SEPTEMBER 20, 2021
OTHERS PRESENT

Gordon Powell
Kyle W. Puryear
C. Derrick Sims
Charlie Palmer
Patricia Gentry - ABSENT

Heidi York, County Manager
Brenda B. Reaves, Clerk to the Board
S. Ellis Hankins, County Attorney

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Person, North Carolina, met in regular session on Monday, September 20, 2021 at 9:00am in the Person County Office Building Auditorium.

Chairman Powell called the meeting to order. Commissioner Gentry was absent.

Chairman Powell offered an invocation and Vice Chairman Puryear led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

DISCUSSION/ADJUSTMENT/APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A **motion** was made by Vice Chairman Puryear and **carried 4-0** to approve the agenda.

PUBLIC HEARING:

REQUEST TO SUBMIT FISCAL YEAR 2023 COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING:

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Palmer and **carried 4-0** to open the duly advertised public hearing for a request to submit FY2023 Community Transportation Program Application for federal and state funding.

Public Transportation Director, Kurt Neufang stated a public hearing was being conducted to consider approval of the FY2023 Community Transportation Program application for federal and state funding and commitment of local share funds to be submitted to NC Department of Transportation no later than October 8, 2021.

The Community Transportation Program supports transportation programs operating in Person County and provides transportation options and services for the communities within this service area. Services are provided using Light Transit (LTV) buses operated by the Person Area Transportation System (PATS.) Mr. Neufang stated PATS would be requesting replacement of two LTV buses in FY2023.

The total estimated amount requested for the period **July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023** is outlined below. NOTE: The local share amount is subject to State funding availability.

September 20, 2021

Project	Total Amount	Local Share	
Administrative	\$ 186,623	\$ 27,994	(15%)
Operating (5311)	\$ 0	\$ 0	(50%)
Capital (Vehicles & Other)	\$ 131,000	\$ 13,100	(10%)
5310 Operating	\$ 0	\$ 0	(50%)
Other	\$ 0	\$ 0	
TOTAL PROJECT	\$ 317,623	\$ 41,094	

Mr. Neufang requested approval to submit FY2023 Community Transportation Program application as well as of local funds.

Commissioner Palmer asked Mr. Neufang if PATS had any CARES Act funding unspent to which Mr. Neufang responded that the PATS department has expended all funding that was awarded this year on operational costs which was a 100% assistance program.

There were no individuals appearing before the Board to speak in favor of or in opposition to the request to submit the FY2023 Community Transportation Program Application for federal and state funding.

A **motion** was made by Vice Chairman Puryear and **carried 4-0** to close the public hearing for a request to submit FY2023 Community Transportation Program Application for federal and state funding.

CONSIDERATION TO GRANT OR DENY REQUEST TO SUBMIT FY2023 COMMUNITY TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING:

A **motion** was made by Vice Chairman Puryear and **carried 4-0** to approve the request to submit FY2023 Community Transportation Program Application for federal and state funding.

INFORMAL COMMENTS:

Chairman Powell announced a three-minute time limit per speaker.

The following individuals appeared before the Board to make informal comments:

Mr. John Seepe of 277 Barefoot Landing Lane, Semora addressed comments made by Commissioner Sims directed at him related to the documents that led him to believe he was on an advisory committee for the college's proposed Advanced Technology Center (ATC).

Mr. Earl Gurtner of 525 Pine Knoll Acres, Leasburg stated he wished to yield his three-minute time to Mr. Seepe. Mr. Seepe questioned if land had indeed been donated to Piedmont Community College for the purpose of the proposed ATC. He asked if the county would mandate its employees to get the vaccine or lose their job when the county is having difficulty retaining and recruiting employees. In addition, Mr. Seepe noted he had spoken to the Planning Director and County Manager to ask if any further directions have been instructed to staff related to any changes to the County's regulations for solar facilities; he warned the Board that time was ticking away for the six-month solar moratorium.

Ms. Liz Bradsher of 976 Estate Road, Semora stated she did not wish to speak.

DISCUSSION/ADJUSTMENT/APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

A **motion** was made by Vice Chairman Puryear and **carried 4-0** to approve the Consent Agenda with the following items:

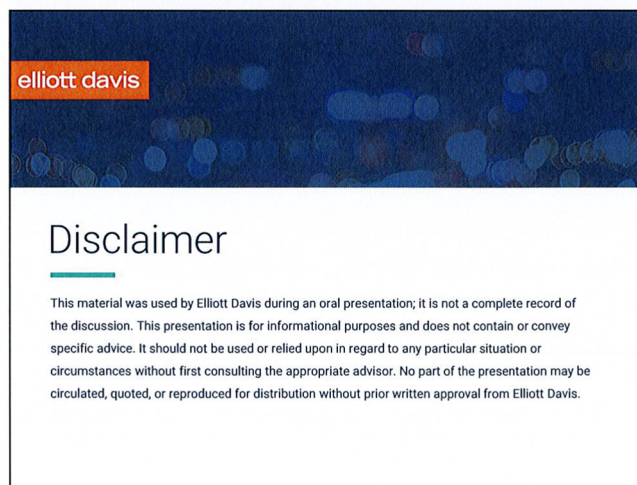
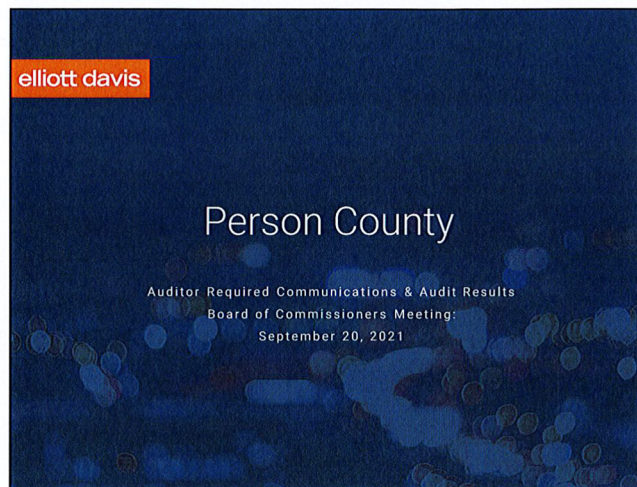
- A. Approval of Minutes of August 16, 2021,
- B. Budget Amendment #4
- C. Budget Amendment #5,
- D. Department of Social Services Legal Contracts for FY2022
 - 1) Contract #1008 for legal services for the Department of Social Services with Thomas Fitzgerald,
 - 2) Contract #1009 for legal services for the Department of Social Services with Thomas Fitzgerald,
 - 3) Contract #1013 for legal services for the Department of Social Services with Julie Ramsey,
 - 4) Contract #1014 for legal services for the Department of Social Services with Ben Holloman, Jr., and
- E. Tax Adjustments for September 2021
 - 1) Tax Releases
 - 2) NC Vehicle Tax System pending refunds

NEW BUSINESS:

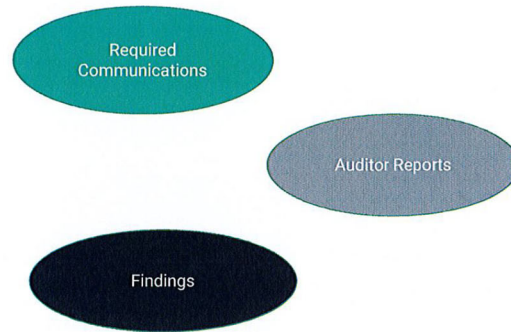
PRESENTATION OF COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT FOR FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2020:

Finance Director, Amy Wehrenberg introduced Mr. Jami Crampton, CPA and Manager with Elliott Davis, LLC, to present to the Board of Commissioners the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) for Person County for Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2020. Each of the commissioners were given a hard copy of the subject audit. Mr. Crampton shared the following presentation:

9/20/2021

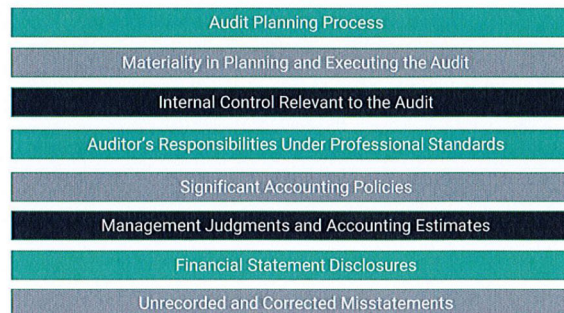


Overview



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Required Communications



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Required Communications

Management Representations
Disagreements with Management
Consultation with Other Accountants
Significant Issues Discussed with Management
Difficulties Encountered in Performing the Audit
Significant Deficiencies and Material Weaknesses
Other Written Communication

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Audit Results

Auditor's Report on Financial Statements	
Audit Responsibilities	Issue an opinion as to whether the financial statements are materially in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP).
	Obtain <i>reasonable</i> (not absolute) assurance regarding material misstatements
	Financial statement audit procedures are <i>not</i> designed to detect fraud
Management Responsibilities	Preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with GAAP
	Maintain sufficient internal control over the preparation of financial statements
Result	An <i>unmodified opinion</i> has been issued on the financial statements.

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Audit Results

Report on Internal Control and Compliance	
Internal Control Over Financial Reporting	Consideration of internal control over financial reporting
	Not to express an opinion on the effectiveness of the County's internal control
Compliance and Other Matters	Compliance with requirements having a <i>direct and material effect</i> on the financial statement amounts.
	Providing an opinion on compliance was <i>not</i> an objective of our audit
Result	Internal controls – Deficiencies identified.
	Noncompliance - No instances having a direct and material effect identified.



Audit Results

Report on Compliance with Major Programs	
Auditor Responsibilities	Issue an opinion on compliance with major federal program requirements
	Conduct the audit in accordance with: Generally Accepted Auditing Standards; Government Auditing Standards, and OMB's Uniform Guidance
Management Responsibilities	Compliance with laws, regulations, contracts, and grants applicable to its federal programs.
	Maintain effective internal control over compliance
Result	The County received a disclaimer of opinion for the Medicaid Cluster. We did not express an opinion on this program. Except for the Medicaid Cluster the County complied in all material respects, with major program requirements.
	Deficiencies identified.



Findings

Financial Statement Findings

Cybersecurity

Check Dating

Accounts Payable Cutoff

Reconciliation of Records

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Findings

Federal and State Awards

Medicaid Household Composition

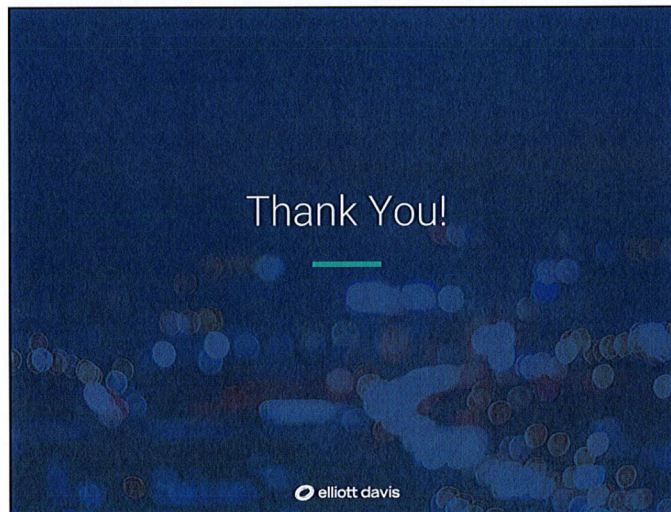
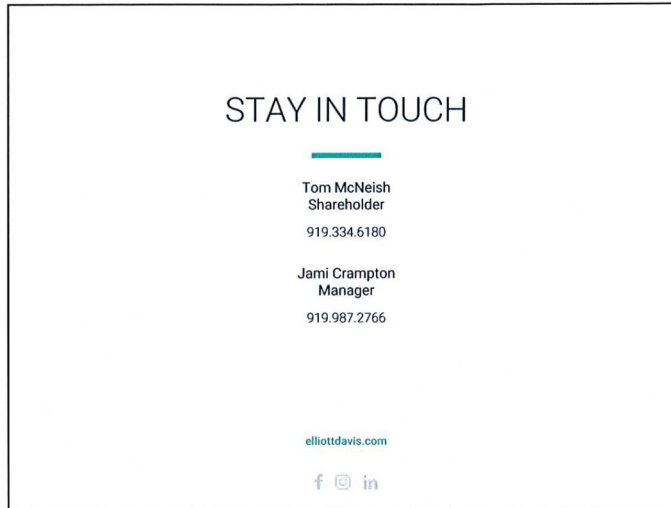
Medicaid Verifications

Low Income Home Energy Assistance Income Verifications

Coronavirus Relief Fund Approvals

 **elliott davis**

9/20/2021



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A **motion** was made by Vice Chairman Puryear and **carried 4-0** to accept the Auditor's Results Report for the Person County Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2020. By reference, a copy of the noted CAFR is incorporated into the minutes and will be on file in the Office of the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners.

September 20, 2021

UPDATE TO THE ORDINANCE REGULATING POSSESSION OR CONSUMPTION OF MALT BEVERAGES OR UNFORTIFIED WINE ON COUNTY PROPERTY:

John Hill, Director of Recreation, Arts, and Parks Department on behalf of the Person County Recreation Advisory Board announced that Person County and Roxboro NC, were chosen by North Carolina Sports, a partner of the North Carolina Division of Commerce and Tourism, to be one of the host sites for the Mountains to Coast Ride (a 7-day bicycle ride across NC) on October 5, 2021. The Huck Sansbury campus will be the main location hosting overnight stays of tourists from around the United States, including CA, TX, FL, CO, NE, MO, VA, CT, ME, PA, TN, IN, MI, OR, GA, MD, DE, SC, NM, KS, KY, OH, MT, LA, IL, WI, WV, and NC. Approximately 800 to 1,000 riders and their families are expected to visit Person County for this event.

During a planning meeting on June 29, 2021, Chip King, the event director from North Carolina Sport, advised Person County's committee that it would be a good idea to have refreshments, a small beer garden, and food trucks for a short duration as the riders arrive at the finish line. Mr. Hill noted Mr. King said that many host sites allow licensed alcohol vendors, as it is a great-added feature that tourists enjoy during their welcome. Mr. Hill stated North Carolina Sports would handle obtaining the vendor and Person County would handle the permitting and insurance for the event. Mr. Hill stated the event would be a very controlled atmosphere. He added riders would arrive at the Huck Sansbury site between 11:00am to 4:00pm; following refreshments, showers, individuals will be shuttled to the Uptown area to showcase our town/county and then shuttled back for early bedtime as riders will be back on the road by 7:00am for the next day's ride.

Mr. Hill stated that during the August 4, 2021 Person County Recreation Advisory Board (RAB) meeting, this was discussed as a desirable feature for the event. The RAB voted unanimously to move forward with requesting approval from the Person County Board of Commissioners to update the Ordinance Regulating Possession or Consumption of Malt Beverages or Unfortified Wine on County Property. The updated ordinance would allow for alcohol to be served or sold at authorized special event locations on County property with the approval by the Board of Commissioners and the required Person County Special Event Alcohol Permits and North Carolina Alcohol license and event permits.

Mr. Hill requested Board consideration to adopt the updated Ordinance Regulating Possession or Consumption of Malt Beverages or Unfortified Wine on County Property; he added the updated ordinance was reviewed by the County Attorney.

County Attorney, Ellis Hankins explained that the current Ordinance Regulating Possession or Consumption of Malt Beverages or Unfortified Wine on County Property generally prohibits alcohol beverages on county owned properties with specific exceptions noting there was no general exception for special events. He noted the proposed updated ordinance before the Board would first repeal the current ordinance and the proposed updated ordinance continues the same prohibition with the same specific exceptions with an added exception for authorizing special event locations upon adoption by the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Hankins said this updated ordinance, upon first consideration, must be approved by all the members of the Board of Commissioners. As Commissioner Gentry was absent, Mr. Hankins recommended that the Board vote at this first consideration and then place it on the Board's next meeting, at which time, a majority vote would adopt the updated ordinance.

Commissioners stated support of the request and complimented Mr. Hill and staff to pull of such an event.

A **motion** was made by Vice Chairman Puryear and **carried 4-0** to adopt the proposed updated Ordinance Regulating Possession or Consumption of Malt Beverages or Unfortified Wine on County Property, as presented. The second reading and action for this Ordinance Regulating Possession or Consumption of Malt Beverages or Unfortified Wine on County Property will take place at the Board's October 4, 2021 meeting.

AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION FOR SPECIAL EVENT LOCATION:

A **motion** was made by Vice Chairman Puryear and **carried 4-0** to postpone consideration of this item for an Authorizing Resolution for Special Event Location to the Board's October 4, 2021 meeting.

POSSIBLE UPDATE TO AUTOMOBILE GRAVEYARD AND JUNKYARD ORDINANCE:

Planning Director, Lori Oakley stated staff has received several inquiries regarding the County's Ordinance Regulating Automobile Graveyards and Junkyards. The current ordinance, as written, allows junk to be screened behind a solid, privacy fence or a combination of a chain link fence and vegetation. Ms. Oakley stated staff was seeking guidance from the Board as to preference for the ordinance to remain as it is currently written, or should the Board prefer any amendments.

The Ordinance Regulating Automobile Graveyards and Junkyards in Person County was originally adopted on September 21, 1987 and re-adopted on April 6, 2015. Since the re-adoption of the ordinance, there have been three text amendments to the ordinance, which include:

- March 2018 – an amendment to clearly distinguish the difference between a commercial and residential junkyard and clarify the penalties for violations.
- March 2020 – an amendment which reduced the screening requirements of a junkyard. The original text required junkyards and automobile graveyards to be screened from public roads, adjacent properties containing dwellings and adjacent properties containing public uses, such as schools and playgrounds. Under the new text, screening was not required along the perimeter of a parcel that was adjacent to a dwelling if that area of the parcel is not visible from a public road or public use.
- May 2021 – an amendment which required screening of junkyards along private roads (in addition to public roads).

Ms. Oakley stated a memorandum related to the Enforcement of the "Ordinance Regulating Automobile Graveyards and Junkyards in Person County" was prepared by The Brough Law Firm:

This Memorandum is submitted to you in order to: (1) provide background on the County's "Ordinance Regulating Automobile Graveyards and Junkyards in Person County" (the "Junkyard Ordinance"); (2) update the Board on the status of County Planning Staff's efforts to address complaints regarding alleged violations of the Junkyard Ordinance at property located at 1235 Cedar Grove Church Road (the "Subject Property"); and (3) to request guidance from the Board on how to address issues with the Junkyard Ordinance.

Factual Background

As the Board may be aware, County Planning Staff have been tracking potential violations of County ordinances on the Subject Property since 2003. On or around December 15, 2011, County Planning Staff first identified potential violations regarding storage of junk on the Subject Property.

On or around May 31, 2016, former-Planning and Zoning Director Michael Ciriello submitted a letter (the "Ciriello Letter") to David Yarboro, owner of the Subject Property, which appears to memorialize an "agreement on the remediation of the violation of the Person County Ordinance Regulating Automobile Graveyards and Junkyards." While it is not expressly stated in the Ciriello Letter, the Ciriello Letter implies that all then-existing violations of the Junkyard Ordinance on the Subject Property were remedied by the County's installation of a fence around the portion of the Subject Property containing the junkyard and/or automobile graveyard and repayment of the associated costs by Mr. Yarboro to the County.

Upon further investigation, it is unclear whether the Subject Property currently does comply with the terms of the Junkyard Ordinance. For instance, there are no records indicating that a license was ever issued permitting the operation of a junkyard and/or automobile graveyard on the Subject Property, as required by Section 8 of the Junkyard Ordinance. It is also unclear whether the existing fence has been maintained in good condition, as required by Section 5 of the Junkyard Ordinance.

County Planning Staff have received several complaints from an adjacent property owner. The complaints appear to be generally related to the condition of the fence, the unkempt state of the Subject Property, and other similar nuisance concerns. County Planning Staff are uncertain whether there is anything that can be done to address those concerns through the Junkyard Ordinance.

Further, even if there were a clear violation of the Junkyard Ordinance, North Carolina law may limit the County's enforcement option.

Summary of North Carolina Law

N.C. Gen Stat. §§ 1-51 and 1-49 establish deadlines within which a unit of local government may bring a code enforcement action "[a]gainst the owner of an interest in real property... for a violation of a land-use statute, ordinance, or permit or any other official action concerning land use carrying the effect of law." Violations that are known to the local government—either through local government staff or through public records—are subject to a five (5) year deadline. Violations that are unknown to the local government but are known to the public are subject to a seven (7) year deadline. Notably, these deadlines do not apply to "for conditions that are actually injurious or dangerous to the public health or safety." Local governments are entitled to file a legal action to remedy those types of violations at any time.

Based on currently available records, it appears that the County may be outside of the deadlines to take legal action to remedy violations of the Junkyard Ordinance. However, the County may still pursue compliance through administrative measures, and which the law firm can discuss with County Planning Staff.

Another option would be for County Planning Staff to prepare an amendment to the Junkyard Ordinance to make it more useable. The amending ordinance could include an amortization period, giving noncompliant junkyards and automobile graveyards a certain period of time to come into compliance with the amended ordinance. This would allow County Planning Staff to ensure that any violations or nonconformities on the Subject Property are remedied. North Carolina law specifically allows these amortization ordinances, provided that they are reasonable in light of the use of the property, the character of the neighborhood, and the detriment caused to the property owner.

Request for Guidance

County Planning Staff and the County Attorneys respectfully request that the Board of County Commissioners provide guidance on the following issues:

September 20, 2021

1. *Does the Board of County Commissioners desire for County Planning Staff to aggressively seek enforcement of the current Junkyard Ordinance on the Subject Property?*
2. *Does the Board of County Commissioners desire for County Planning Staff to prepare a text amendment to the Junkyard Ordinance and propose an amortization period?*
3. *How does the Board of County Commissioners prefer for County Planning Staff to address complaints made by neighboring property owners?*

Ms. Oakley discussed with the Board a particular property drawing complaints that are documented since 2003 at 1235 Cedar Grove Church Road, owned by David T. Yarboro.

Ms. Oakley recalled this was the same property back in 2015 that received a junk violation notice from the former Planning Director to screen, but the deadline was not met. Following remediation, a fence installer was hired by the County to completely fence the junk from view and a payment schedule was set up with the property owner. Ms. Oakley confirmed the property owner has fully reimbursed the County for the costs of the fence. In 2018, Ms. Oakley notified the property owner of a violation as the junk was visible due to the fence was in disrepair; however, the fence was repaired and the property was back into compliance. More recently, a neighboring property family member, Mr. Ken Humphries, has complained about the junk and RV/Campers on the property. Ms. Oakley noted the latest violation letter was sent in July related to too many RV/Campers were on the property. She noted that Ms. Yarboro recently came into the office to state all but one RV/Camper was removed; Ms. Oakley said she and her staff were scheduled to visit the site to confirm compliance.

Commissioner Palmer said there was a complaint about oil was leaked into the ground. Ms. Oakley stated that complaint would not be handled by the Planning Department and that the Environmental Health Department and/or state agencies could be contacted for further investigation; she said she gave Mr. Humphries contact information for those appropriate agencies to follow-up on an oil leakage.

Ms. Oakley requested the Board to direct staff on how the Board would like to proceed with enforcement and a possible text amendment of the Automobile Graveyard and Junkyard Ordinance. She told the group that an amendment to the ordinance to prohibit junk on residential property would mean all junk would have to be removed, including behind the privacy fence. In addition, she suggested setting up an amortization schedule for a time period specific, i.e., 12 month, 18 months. Ms. Oakley stated such amendment would have consequences as it would apply to all property owners in the county and there would be no grandfathering.

The Board asked Mr. Ken Humphries, who was present in the audience, if he desired to make any comments. Mr. Humphries asked that the property owner be held to the law; he said it was an illegal dump on the property in question and that there are multiple unlicensed vehicles, including trailers, and boats on the property. Mr. Humphries said the Environmental Health Department blew him off and the Tax Office added \$5,000 value to the property tax without investigating the unlicensed vehicles.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Sims and **carried 4-0** for County Planning Staff to aggressively seek enforcement of the current Junkyard Ordinance on the Subject Property.

Vice Chairman Puryear stated he was not prepared for a text amendment without further review of any unintended consequences. He added he would like to have the minimum impact for properties that have no complaints. Ms. Oakley said if the Board desires to prohibit junk from residential properties that other property owners that are currently in compliance could possibly be in violation and would have to remove all junk. Vice Chairman Puryear requested staff to work on a solution without negative impact to other properties that are in compliance.

Ms. Oakley noted for the group that her department only investigates complaints that are brought to them for any ordinance violations. Ms. York told the Board staff would bring back suggestions at a future meeting.

PERMITTING PROCESS IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE:

County Manager, Heidi York stated following the concerns about the length of the permitting process for the County Inspections and Environmental Health services that were expressed at the April 20th Homebuilders Association, the Board of Commissioners received a report from staff on May 3rd with strategies to improve the permitting process. At that time, the process of issuing a building permit was taking about 20 days. Planning and Zoning were turning around land use applications, site plans, and stormwater plan reviews within 1 to 2 days. Environmental Health site evaluations were taking approximately 10 weeks to complete.

Ms. York said on May 21st, staff provided a written update to the Board on the improvements being implemented in both Inspections and Environmental Health. At that time, building inspections were being conducted within 1-2 business days, with the turnaround time for the permit including plan reviews, being completed in 14 business days. The Express Plan Reviews were being rolled out later that week to expedite service.

Ms. York noted that on June 15th, staff provided another written update to the Board, addressing questions about the permitting process. At this point, the turnaround time for a building permit within the Inspections Department had improved to 10 business days.

Ms. York said that in August, Chairman Powell expressed his expectations for the Inspections, Environmental Health, and Planning and Zoning Departments' permitting process and the following report provides a follow-up to improvements being implemented in these departments and addresses the permit timeframes that can be expected.

Assistant County Manager, Katherine Cathey shared the following Permitting Process Improvement Plan Update presentation:

Permitting Process Improvement Plan Update

September 20, 2021



Progress Since May 3, 2021 Presentation

- New Positions Approved May 3
 - Environmental Health Specialist – new employee started work Aug. 30, authorized to begin site evaluations Sept. 9
 - Chief Building Inspector (Level 3)
- Contract or Temporary Assistance
- Residential and Express Plan Reviews
- Energov Implementation
- Inspections Timeframes
- Permitting Timeframes



New Positions Approved May 3

An Environmental Health Specialist position was added, and the new employee began work on August 30. On September 9, he was authorized by the state to begin site evaluations.

A Chief Building Inspector (Level 3) position was added, and the selected candidate declined the job offer. Although Level 3 certification is preferred, a Level 2 inspector would enable the department to redistribute the inspection workload (alleviating the need for some overtime) and complete plan reviews more quickly. A second recruitment period closed on September 9. We recruited for a Level 2 or Level 3 inspector and received six applications. None of the applicants met the minimum qualifications. Staff will consider options for restructuring the new position to attract qualified applicants and address operational needs. Options may include a Level 1 inspector, a Plans Examiner (Level 2 or Level 3), a Customer Service Representative or other role.

Contract or Temporary Assistance

The Inspections Department was unable to find a qualified inspector who was available to serve in this capacity. Since the Environmental Health Division has been able to onboard an experienced employee, the utilization of a contract employee will not be necessary at this point.

Residential and Express Plan Reviews

The Inspections Department implemented an express review process. Approximately 10 plans have been reviewed through this process. When staff receive an application with engineered plans, they put it at the front of the line, and it receives expedited approval for a building permit. Builders who have taken advantage of this process have been happy with the quicker turnaround, and the process has not delayed other plan reviews.

Applicants for Environmental Health services also have the option of expediting the permit process by using private engineers and soil scientists.

Energov Implementation

Environmental Health, Inspections and Planning & Zoning are all utilizing the Energov system. The system is now available for customers to submit permit applications online. Customers may also submit payment, correspond with staff, update information, and track the status of their application through the web-based customer self-service (CSS) portal. (Planning & Zoning has temporarily halted online permit applications because workflows need to be reconfigured in the system. The department is issuing permits and accepting payments through Energov.) Paper applications are still accepted in each department and are manually entered into Energov by staff. A required system update will be performed by Tyler Technologies on September 23. Person County's Energov system may be down on September 24 to address any issues that arise from the upgrade. Staff will provide a demonstration in the new Energov system at an upcoming Board meeting.

Permitting Timeframes

Since April 2021, the average timeframe for completing an environmental health site evaluation has been reduced from 10 weeks to 7 weeks. The county's goal is to issue improvement permits within 30 calendar days. The state requires Health Departments to issue improvement permits within 60-90 calendar days of application submittal, and we are currently meeting that target. Fewer applications have been submitted in recent months, and some applicants have utilized the expedited permit options.

Environmental health services have been prioritized by the Board of Health to ensure the division fulfills its primary mission of protecting public health. "Site evaluations for new construction" are categorized as medium priority, and there are many other environmental health functions that are a higher priority. Site evaluations require field work and are time-consuming. They are scheduled around other activities, such as inspections and investigations of existing infrastructure and services that could potentially pose a threat to public health if not addressed in a timely manner.

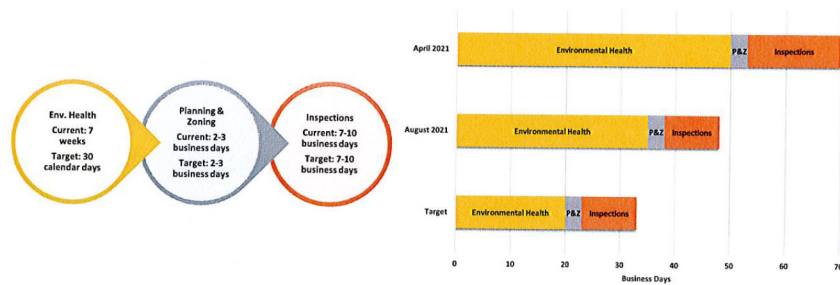
When all of the paperwork is correct for Planning & Zoning (land use application and site plan and stormwater, if applicable), the zoning permit is issued in two to three business days. As with other steps in the permitting process, when the customer has something missing or wrong on the paperwork, that timeframe depends on how soon they make the corrections.

The timeframe for issuing a building permit has been reduced from 20 business days to 10-14 business days (for approvals from Planning & Zoning and Inspections). Incomplete applications and/or issues that must be corrected slow down the approval process. Fewer applications have been submitted in the months following the spring rush.

Inspections staff has kept up with next-day inspections by working overtime, particularly in the southern part of the county. When the inspector assigned to southern properties is busy, the other two inspectors are tasked with completing site plan reviews without his assistance.

Ms. Cathey indicated the target timeframe for the complete process, as indicated on the slide below, is 34 business days once the new Energov is fully implemented.

Permitting Timeframes



2020/2021 Challenges

- Energov implementation
- COVID-19
- Cyber incident
- Increased development activity
- Staff turnover and recruitment



Each of the challenges listed above demanded many, many hours of staff time that would otherwise have been dedicated to their normal job duties, therefore contributing to delays in issuing permits at various times throughout the past 18 months. Energov was planned

but time-consuming as staff dedicated a considerable amount of time to training and configuring the system. COVID-19 and the cyber incident were unanticipated, prolonged events that strained staff time, pulled Environmental Health employees into vaccination clinics, and impacted morale and wellness. Increased development activity and staff turnover are challenges that may occur in any year, but when combined with the other exceptional events of 2020, these challenges have pushed staff to the limit as they have diligently worked to meet expectations.

Additional Information

After Hours Response

The Inspections Director has a county cell phone and responds to urgent calls, texts, and Facebook messages after hours. Although his regular work schedule is 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., which corresponds to established county office hours, he routinely adjusts his schedule to conduct inspections early in the morning, in the evening, and on weekends to meet customers' needs. In addition, he has conducted video inspections while on vacation.

Most department heads are not required to be on-call 24/7. Outside of established office hours, they are expected to be generally available, occasionally check messages, and respond when necessary.

Customer Service Survey

A link to a Customer Service Survey is available on the Inspections Department website. During the week of September 13, staff began emailing customers to encourage them to provide feedback through the survey after receiving their permit(s). In addition, staff have provided the link to customers who received service in the past six months. Staff will review survey responses, recognize successes and make improvements, as needed.

Environmental Health Manpower Study

On September 9, the Division of Environmental Health completed two manpower studies for the Person County on-site wastewater and wells programs. The first study indicates the need for 2.6 full-time employees (FTEs) solely dedicated to the on-site wastewater and wells programs without the required operation and maintenance program that the county stopped due to staffing and other demands. The second study includes the operation and maintenance program and indicates the need for 3.4 FTEs solely dedicated to the on-site wastewater and wells programs.

Currently, three Environmental Health Specialists (formerly 2.0 FTEs, now 3.0 FTEs with the addition of a new employee this month) support the on-site wastewater and wells programs and also cover migrant housing inspections, childhood lead investigations, and tattoo inspections. They also assist with office coverage when needed. Based on the state report, the county will be approximately 1.0 FTE short if the operation and maintenance program is reinstated, since staff is also working on other programs and activities in addition to on-site and wells.

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Environmental Health Monthly Report

	BUDGETED EXPENDITURE BY MONTHLY PERIOD FOR 2013				TOTAL 2013
	BUDGETED EXPENDITURE BY QUARTER PERIOD				
	Q1 2013	Q2 2013	Q3 2013	Q4 2013	
Operating Expenses - General	15	15	15	15	60
Operating Expenses - Special	0	0	0	0	0
Capital Expenditures	0	0	0	0	0
Depreciation & Amortization	20	20	20	20	80
Interest on Long-Term Debt	15	15	15	15	60
Operating Income	240	240	240	240	960
Operating Loss	20	20	20	20	80
Amortization of Costs	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	6,000
Interest on Debt	1,100	1,100	1,100	1,100	4,400
Operating Profit Before Taxes	1,980	1,980	1,980	1,980	7,920
Income Taxes	300	300	300	300	1,200
Operating Profit After Taxes	1,680	1,680	1,680	1,680	6,720
Other Expenses	0	0	0	0	0
Operating Profit After All Taxes	1,680	1,680	1,680	1,680	6,720
Operating Profit Before Taxes	1,980	1,980	1,980	1,980	7,920
Income Taxes	300	300	300	300	1,200
Operating Profit After All Taxes	1,680	1,680	1,680	1,680	6,720

[illegible]

The Energov system will produce reports that are quick to run and provide additional useful data. In order for these reports to be accurate and convey the information requested by the Board (number of permits denied, timeframes and reasons for denial), all applications would need to be entered by the customer and tracked within Energov. Not only would this help with accurate reporting, it will more effectively utilize the new system and staff time. Although this approach would fully utilize the Energov system, there are many customers who would be unwilling to submit their applications online due to being one-time applicants or lacking the necessary technology resources or knowledge.

Staff will continue to evaluate the reporting features available in Energov as more data is entered into the system and revise monthly reports to better reflect each department's workload and outcomes.

Ms. Cathey said Energov could benefit the contractors as they would not have to come into the office, although, contractors could continue to come into the system to submit its application. She added all applications would be entered into the Energov and a status would be provided in the system. Ms. York reminded the group a demonstration of the Energov would be provided to the Board at a future meeting.

Although we have created a “one-stop shop”, physically and electronically, the reality is that citizens are still working through the unique requirements, stipulated by state and local law, of three different departments/divisions. Our customers may not know who to contact regarding a particular matter or understand how the coordinated process flows from one-step to another and the timeframes involved.

Staff has considered the opportunity presented by Energov to add a Customer Service Representative (CSR) position that would staff the counter, providing a physical presence to greet the public and serving as an answering point for general calls and emails for all development services departments. The CSR would serve as the intake person for permit applications submitted on paper or through Energov and would be available to help customers navigate the application process on public kiosks or remotely. In addition, the CSR would be cross-trained on the basics for each department and prepared to answer questions as they arise or direct questions to the appropriate staff member. The CSR would monitor the flow of permit applications through Energov, follow-up when there is a delay (internally and with the applicant), and facilitate a quicker approval process and more timely communication. The support provided by this new position would free up time spent by current staff who are manually entering applications and taking credit card payments, provide a more seamless experience for the public, and improve overall satisfaction for all involved in the permitting process.

Commissioner Palmer suggested a customer service representative would be beneficial to the contractors to which Ms. York stated could potentially be an enhanced level of service.

Reporting

The Inspections Department and Environmental Health Division report workload measures on a monthly basis (most recent reports attached). Both of these reports are created by manually aggregating data that is maintained in Energov and on paper. It is a time-consuming process. Staff does not have a standard method for tracking incomplete permit applications. Generally, when an incomplete application is presented at the Inspections window, staff returns the paperwork to the applicant and explains how to resubmit a complete application. If missing information is discovered after the application has been accepted, staff notes the missing information and contacts the applicant. The application is then put on hold pending their response. Staff has not identified an efficient means of tracking this information as it is handled differently in each department. At the Board’s request, staff will manually compile this information on a monthly basis to include as an addendum to their reports.

Chairman Powell stated his memo was prompted due to the number of complaints received by the Board and wanted to remind each department manager to review its goals and objectives as they are extremely important to the growth of Person County. He indicated he would like to continue to receive the monthly reports to have a more clearer understanding.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Chairman Powell wanted to compliment the many volunteers working to better Person County on county boards and committees.

MANAGER'S REPORT:

County Manager, Heidi York addressed the question related to the county's workforce being required to be vaccinated noting she was awaiting further guidance. At this time, Person County does not have a requirement for vaccination and/or weekly testing.

COMMISSIONER REPORT/COMMENTS:

Vice Chairman Puryear had no comments.

Commissioner Palmer asked the County Manager if any vaccine requirement would include the commissioners to which Ms. York stated there was no guidance on that subject at this time.

Commissioner Sims reiterated he participated on a Mechatronics Advisory Board and has not served on any committee related to the Advanced Technology Center (ATC). He said he would ask the college representatives if land had been donated for the purpose of the ATC. Commissioner Sims noted his plan was to request that an update from the EDC Task Force be placed on the Board's agenda as to his knowledge the Task Force met last in May and questioned if the Board needed this Task Force or if it was a waste of the good folks' time that were volunteering; he added Commissioner Gentry said a report would not be ready until November. Commissioner Sims reported he attended a Business After Hours event that included a Ribbon Cutting for Empire Egyptians operated by Jillian Whitlow; in addition he celebrated with Cole's Pharmacy attaining 65 years in business.

ADJOURNMENT:

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Palmer and **carried 4-0** to adjourn the meeting at 10:59am.

Brenda B. Reaves
Clerk to the Board

Gordon Powell
Chairman

September 20, 2021