

The Madison County Board of Commissioners met in special session on Tuesday, February 28, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. at the North Carolina Cooperative Extension-Madison County Center located at 258 Carolina Lane, Marshall, North Carolina.

In attendance were Chairman Matt Wechtel; Commissioners Bill Briggs, Jeremy Hensley, and Alan Wyatt; County Manager Rod Honeycutt; and Clerk Mandy Bradley. Vice-Chairman Michael Garrison joined to listen to the meeting remotely via electronic means at 6:00 p.m.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Chairman Wechtel.

Item 1: Joint Meeting with the Madison County Economic Development Board

Board introductions were provided by Chairman Wechtel and Ryan Cody, Economic Development Board Chairman.

Erica Anderson with Land of Sky discussed funding opportunities for economic development in the County as well as answered questions from board members. Information discussed included programs, funding sources, allocations, and qualifying considerations.

Brad Guth, Economic Development Director discussed economic development activity areas, objectives, and organizations as well as answered questions from members of the Board of Commissioners. Information discussed included retention and expansion, marketing and attraction, job creation and retention, and professional economic development organizations.

Discussion regarding revenue created from sales tax in the County and the need for goods and services was had by members of each board.

Mr. Cody discussed regional employment data for the area including wages, recruitment, and incentive packages with Mr. Guth providing information regarding income levels for median, per capita, and weekly wages.

Information regarding industry and schools located within the County was discussed by Mr. Cody who also noted the most recent data for manufacturing, construction, and other service employers with Forrest Gilliam, Economic Development Vice-Chairman discussing wage information for employment sectors and the top employers in the County as noted in data from 2021.

Further information regarding employment areas including manufacturing, healthcare, and construction were discussed by Mr. Gilliam who noted the list as ranking in the top three areas in the County. Additional discussion was had regarding wage data with Mr. Gilliam noting the need to look at prevailing wages and how to grow economic wage to retain employment for residents of the County.

Mr. Guth discussed industrial buildings for use in the County and funding available from the Golden LEAF SITE Development Program to help rural communities such as Madison County with Mr. Cody discussing the top priorities of the Economic Development Board including site development, marketing and attraction, business retention and expansion, workforce development, and infrastructure. Discussion regarding each of the noted areas was had.

Further discussion was led by Mr. Cody regarding site development and the recruitment of business to the County with discussion regarding previously identified industrial sites in various areas of the County while noting the top priority as the Madison County Industrial Park site on Long Branch Road in Marshall. Discussion was had regarding information such as grant funding for site development and additional funding sources for economic development projects to be retained in the Economic Development budget was had by members of the boards who also discussed that available funding would allow for projects to be completed at a faster pace.

The current Golden LEAF SITE Development grant cycle was revisited by Mr. Guth who discussed phases of each cycle including site identification, due diligence, and site development and how those areas related to projects in the County at this time, particularly with two identified sites including the Industrial site located on Long Branch in Marshall and Parkway View Industrial Park in Mars Hill with Economic Development Board member Lee McElrath further discussing the information and Mr. Guth answering questions from board members. Additional information regarding the recruitment of business inside and outside of the area and how to market, target, and attract smaller scale operations originating from larger operations in the area was discussed.

Discussion regarding affordable housing and ways to achieve the concept as well as incentive plans and grants for business were discussed by members of the boards. April Riddle with the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina addressed board members regarding leadership programs for affordable housing and other areas of which assistance could be offered to the County including future projects.

Commissioner Wyatt exited the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Discussion regarding affordable housing in the County was had by board members.

Commissioner Wyatt returned to the meeting at 7:21 p.m.

Discussion regarding infrastructure in the County including broadband, sewer, water, and roads was had by members of the boards with further discussion being had regarding the work that is to come.

Upon motion by Commissioner Wyatt and second by Commissioner Hensley, the Board voted unanimously to recess. The Board took recess from 7:36 p.m. to 7:58 p.m.

Item 2: Adjournment

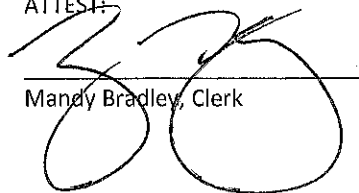
Upon motion by Commissioner Wyatt and second by Commissioner Hensley, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:59 p.m.

This the 28th day of February 2023.

MADISON COUNTY


Matt Wechtel, Chairman
Board of Commissioners

ATTEST:


Mandy Bradley, Clerk