

County: ferry should go to the Authority

By Gary Pethe
Staff Writer

At their April 5 regular meeting, Brunswick County commissioners unanimously approved a resolution supporting acquisition of the Bald Head Island ferry transportation system by the Bald Head Island (BHI) Transportation Authority.

The Authority had sought support from commissioners for its purchase of the system from private owner Bald Head Island Limited LLC, a move contemplated by the state legislature when it enacted the Ferry Transportation Authority Act in 2017.

Over the past four years, the BHI Transportation Authority has engaged in meetings with governmental stakeholders, private businesses, property owners and BHI residents regarding the potential acquisition of the ferry system by the Authority. The system includes the ferry vessels, barge, trams, terminal buildings, parking lots and related assets.

On December 8, 2020, the Authority approved the asset purchase agreement and adopted a findings resolution required as a prerequisite for Local Government Commission (LGC) approval of a bond sale. Then on March 22 of this year, the Village of Bald Head Island expressed to the LGC

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it was interested in acquiring the ferry system, as opposed to having the Authority acquire it. As of March 26, the LGC had not received a formal offer, noting that the current owner, Bald Head Island Limited LLC, "Does not intend to engage in negotiations with the Village."

During the commissioners meeting, County Attorney Bob Shaver noted in the resolution that, in contrast to the diverse constituency of the Authority, the permanent residents of the Village of Bald Head Island represent less than 10-percent of annual ferry ridership.

The approved resolution stated that Brunswick County encourages the LGC to promptly consider and schedule the Authority's request for approval to proceed with acquisition and bond issue.

County vision and values

Brunswick County Communications Director Meagan Kacsak presented final mission, vision and values statements for 2021-2022. Commissioners had requested that staff review and revise the county's mission, vision and values statements based on input provided during the December 17, 2020, regular meeting and the February 1 workshop.

Final statements as approved by the board April 5 are:

- Mission: We provide the highest level of service to support an active, dynamic and thriving community. In cooperation

with our local and regional partners, we collaborate to provide responsive and efficient services that support and advance the development of our community's educational, recreational and economic prosperity.

- Vision: Brunswick County is a prosperous, vibrant and forward-thinking community that offers opportunities to enhance and sustain the highest quality of life for residents.

- Values:

- Respect - We treat our residents and one another with the highest regard for dignity and courtesy. We exemplify the dedication, efficiency, and effectiveness recognized as exceptional customer service qualities;

- Integrity - We strive to be honest and transparent in all that we do. We provide accurate information and guidance to strengthen positive relationships between residents and their county government;

- Collaboration - We are open-minded and welcoming to new ideas and diverse perspectives. We engage and foster strong, long-lasting partnerships to expand our opportunities for feedback and representation in our decisions and actions;

- Accountability - We honor the authority entrusted to us to serve and protect our residents and preserve our natural and fiscal resources through ethical and responsible stewardship.

- Innovative - We are a goal oriented and

future-driven community that seeks out thoughtful and industrious means to improve service quality and delivery both effectively and affordably.

Other presentations

Executive Director Bill Early and Kevin Lackey, Business Development Manager, provided board members a summary of Brunswick BID's current marketing efforts and campaign. BID is Brunswick County's business and industry development initiative that encourages and promotes development of new business and industry. It also works for retention of existing business and industry and promotes industrial development and general economic welfare of Brunswick County.

Lackey discussed the county's branding basics, and provided a look at marketing communication tools BID is using - and plans to use - for various media channels.

David Stanley, Deputy County Manager for Health and Human Services, provided a COVID-19 update for commissioners. He said the county is continuing to work with both private and public officials to navigate the pandemic and provide relevant information to its citizens, and noted that vaccine supplies and vaccine providers have been increasing. Individuals are encouraged to schedule first dose vaccine appointments at county clinics as they are available.