



**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING MINUTES OF THE
PAMLICO COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MONDAY, JULY 24, 2023**

The Pamlico County Board of Commissioners held a Special Called Meeting on Monday, July 24, 2023 at 10:00am in the Patsy H. Sadler room of the Pamlico County Courthouse. Commissioners Missy Baskervill, Kari Forrest, Candy Bohmert, Ed Riggs, Pat Prescott, and Carl Ollison were present. Also present were County Manager Tim Buck, and Clerk to the Board Chantelle Allison. Commissioner Doug Brinson was not in attendance.

Chairman Riggs called the meeting to order.

Commissioner Baskervill made a motion, seconded by Commissioner Bohmert, to approve the following resolution:

**A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE TOLLS ON FERRY SERVICE OPERATIONS OF THE
CHERRY BRANCH TO MINNESOTT BEACH FERRY ROUTE**

- WHEREAS,** House Bill 259, Short title 2023 State Appropriations Act calls for tolling all ferry routes in North Carolina including the Cherry Branch to Minnesott Beach Ferry Route; and
- WHEREAS,** the Minnesott Beach Ferry Terminal is in Pamlico County, North Carolina; and
- WHEREAS,** Pamlico County is an isolated, rural county, surrounded by water on the eastern and southern sides, limiting efficient access to neighboring jurisdictions; and
- WHEREAS,** ferries are an integral part of the road systems in Eastern NC and until bridges can be built, ferries are more economical transportation; and
- WHEREAS,** a ferry is an extension of the highway system and such proposed addition of ferry tolls where there is none at present will constitute an unfair taxation burden upon residents of areas served by ferry service; and
- WHEREAS,** in Pamlico County, the Cherry Branch/ Minnesott Beach Ferry that crosses the Neuse River, is extremely important to the local economy, providing transportation to local businesses, community colleges, public schools and U.S. Marine Corp Air Station Cherry Point; and
- WHEREAS,** due to rural isolation of the area, residents of Pamlico County must drive longer distances to obtain basic needs such as employment, food, and medical care; and
- WHEREAS,** because of driving longer distances, residents of Pamlico County pay more in fuel taxes, per capita, than most North Carolinians, thus funding the highway system at a greater per capita amount; and
- WHEREAS,** there have been past attempts to put tourism-based fee policies into place that are extremely detrimental to regional workforce, educational, medical access, and industry needs; and
- WHEREAS,** imposition of tolls would create a significant hardship on residents of Pamlico County, whose residents, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics rank lowest out of 100 North Carolina Counties in weekly wage earnings.
- NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** the Pamlico County Board of Commissioners strongly

opposes tolls on ferry service between Minnesott Beach and Cherry Branch, and on other ferry routes where there are no tolls at present and urges the legislature to remove Section 41.11C from House Bill 259 that authorizes tolling on all ferry routes.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, Pamlico County Board of Commissioners join other coastal communities to urge the legislature to adequately fund the ferry system and to oppose increases on the tolls currently existing on other ferry services.

Commissioner Riggs invited the Board to comment and then allowed members from the public to speak informally. Everyone who spoke was in favor of the proposed Resolution, and in opposition to the section in NC House Bill 259 authorizing tolling on all ferry routes. Concerns included: extra cost for local residents to commute to work, residents already pay gas tax which funds the ferries therefore double taxing ferry commuters who use the service, loss of local tourist revenue from discouraged travelers that don't want to be charged just to visit, and a violation of N.C.G.S. § 136-89.187 – Conversion of free highways prohibited. The Minnesott Beach to Cherry Branch ferry, in particular, is a continuation of State Highway 306, and therefore should not be a pay-to-use highway.

Once everyone had been given the opportunity to speak, Chairman Riggs addressed the motion/second to approve the Resolution. The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, on a motion made by Commissioner Bohmert and seconded by Commissioner Baskervill, the Board adjourned until the next regular meeting on Monday, August 7, 2023 at 7:00pm. Time recorded: 10:10am

Chairman

Clerk to the Board