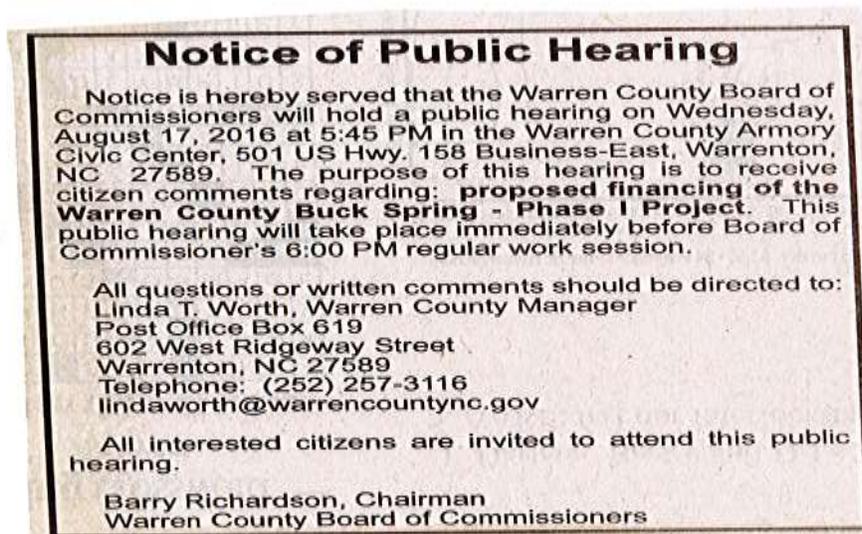


**MINUTES FROM A PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED WARREN COUNTY BUCK SPRING PHASE I PROJECT HELD BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THE COUNTY OF WARREN IN THE WARREN COUNTY ARMORY CIVIC CENTER MEETING ROOM ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2016 AT 5:45 PM.**

The Public Hearing was called to order by Chairman Barry Richardson. Other Commissioners present: Bertadean Baker, Tare Davis, Jennifer Jordan Pierce and Victor Hunt. Others in attendance: County Manager Linda T. Worth, Finance Director Gloria Edmonds and County Attorney Jamie Wilkerson.

A moment of silence was followed by Clerk to the Board of Commissioners Angelena Kearney-Dunlap reading the Notice of Public Hearing.



**Citizen comments were as follows:**

Ron Skow: Realizes the historic value of the property; but since there is no infrastructure in the area (hotels and restaurants too far away), does not see potential for significant business. Property has water access that is limited by a single lane road, a small boat dock and water that is 2 to 3 feet deep. There is no need to go beyond Phase I of the project, the money would be better spent elsewhere.

Bill Heflin: (Expressed similar sentiments as previous speaker.) Taxes have been raised, cost does not justify project. Does not seem like the right time or place.

Mike Hairston: Did research on the Buck Spring project and found that October/November 2014 the budget for Engineer/Architect, infrastructure & construction was approximately \$205,000 which was reasonable. A custom designed house is less than \$150 per sq. /ft. The proposed Buck Spring Cabin appears to be twice that amount. A similar building was done by an Amish construction crew at much cheaper cost.

County Manager Linda T. Worth gave a thorough Overview of the Buck Spring Phase I Project:

**Warren County Buck Spring Project  
Phase I - Buck Spring Cabin**

**Introduction**

Buck Spring Plantation, the historical home site of Nathaniel Macon, a Warren County native who most notably served as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives in the early 1800's, is owned by Warren County. The 70+- acre property located in the northeastern quadrant of the County has boat access and a pier on Hubquarter Creek a tributary of picturesque Lake Gaston. Nathaniel Macon's burial site and historical home site consisting of a group of historically significant, reconstructed and new structures (homestead is listed on the National Register of Historic Places) are situated on the property.

In the last three years, Warren County has made several significant improvements on the property now known as Buck Spring Park with the assistance of a NC Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant in the amount of \$49,828 that was matched dollar for dollar by the County for a total investment of \$99,656. Repairs were made to the picnic shelter, a new playground area was constructed; new picnic tables were installed at the picnic shelter and at the pier; a new trail head was constructed and the nature trail was upgraded; the pier was re-built and the access road to the pier was upgraded; new split-rail fencing was installed around the open green space and new signage has been installed throughout the park.

**Overview of Buck Spring Project – Phase I**

The Buck Spring Project – Phase I consists of the construction of a 2,176 sq. ft. multi-purpose use cabin on the Buck Spring property along with supporting infrastructure improvements. As part of this project the old 4-H building that was formerly located on the property has been demolished and the land cleared for the new construction. The project Architect is Solex Architecture, Inc. of Danville, VA.

The cabin will be used as a meeting/retreat facility for 4-H programming, county/state agencies, educational entities, and other public and private entities. The facility is designed with an open floor plan with office space for a Sheriff's Office satellite and a part-time caretaker. The facility will complement the recreational amenities currently located in Buck Spring Park.

The Phase I project budget for the construction of a multi-purpose use cabin and supporting infrastructure improvements (public water line extension/septic system/underground electric and site development), is estimated to cost \$485,878 per bid awarded to DanCo Builders, Inc. by the Board of County Commissioners at their May 2, 2016 regular meeting. Warren County has \$165,878 in local funds in the capital project, leaving a balance of \$320,000 to be financed.

On July 14, 2016, Warren County issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for Installment Financing Agreement to several financial institutions. One proposal was received from Capital Bank with the following terms: 1.95% Interest Rate – Interest plus fees in the amount of \$18,359.71, for a 5-year term. Collateral shall be limited to the structure to be constructed.

At their August 1, 2016 meeting the Board of County Commissioners awarded the bid for financing to Capital Bank pending approval of the Local Government Commission. The County expects to obtain Local Government Commission approval of the installment financing on September 6, 2016.

Warren County plans to sustain the Buck Spring Park facility with annual budget appropriations from the County General Fund for operations and maintenance. We will also charge reasonable rental fees for the use of the multi-purpose use cabin and grounds to help defray the cost of maintaining the facility. The County also plans to apply for additional loans/grants, host annual fundraisers and solicit philanthropic gifts and other private donations to help fund Phases II and III of the Buck Spring Project.

**Conclusion**

When the Buck Spring - Phase I Project is completed, citizens in our economically distressed region will have access to a fully usable, safe and accessible facility that will accommodate a multitude of educational, recreational, health and wellness activities. A safe and aesthetically pleasing facility will become a source of community pride that will bring all segments of the community together, including the four local units of government (Warren County, and the Towns of Warrenton, Norlina and Macon), the county's citizens, and the private sector resulting in a better quality of life for all. Buck Spring Park is a jewel in the rough that can potentially become the catalyst to stimulate the local economy through the creation and retention of jobs and investment in the county's tax base. Job creation and retention will be realized through the need for ancillary services and goods to support numerous meetings and events at the new facility, i.e. catering services, food, beverages, and other supplies provided by local grocery and department stores, vendors for outdoor activities, event planners, etc.

The proposed new multi-purpose use cabin is also anticipated to increase tourism appeal resulting from activities and programming at the Buck Spring Park making Warren County "a destination of choice" for individuals from surrounding locales and the State of Virginia which borders Warren County to the North. Increased tourism traffic will positively impact the County's economy through increased sales and use tax revenues resulting from dollars spent in Warren County by visitors attending events at Buck Spring who will also be encouraged to visit Warrenton's Historic Downtown District and the County's Historic District attractions.

Additional information was provided about the project by Ken Bowman, EDC Director, from an economic development point of view. He indicated the project is anticipated to increase tourism in Warren County.

William Bill Davis inquired of the actual cost per sq. ft. for the building to be constructed in Phase I. The County Manager informed Mr. Davis that she would provide that information to him.

On motion of Commissioner Davis, which was seconded by Commissioner Hunt and duly carried, the Budget Public Hearing was adjourned at 6:02 pm.

  
Angelena Kearney-Dunlap, Clerk