

March 26, 2014—Planning Retreat

The Randolph County Board of Commissioners met in special session at the Randolph Community College Foundation Conference Center for a Planning Retreat. Commissioners Holmes, Frye, Kemp, Lanier and Haywood were present, as well as, County Manager Richard Wells; Assistant County Manager/Finance Officer Will Massie; Associate County Attorney Aimee Scotton; Paxton Arthurs, Public Works Director; Cheryl Ivey, Clerk to the Board and Amanda Varner, Deputy Clerk to the Board. County Department Heads/staff and representatives of agencies were in attendance and made presentations where so noted later in these minutes.

At 12:45 pm, Chairman Holmes called the meeting to order.

Economic Development Strategies

Bonnie Renfro, EDC President, stated that several economic development realities and trends impact our economy, such as product, workforce, infrastructure, target audiences and what we have in our “tool box.” Those tools are the marketing of the county, a site location, etc.; incentive programs; professional staff and organization and the reserve fund. She said that the model we have followed for decades is changing. The Department of Commerce has reorganized and is still working through their changes. The regional partnership no longer has a rural focus, but there are opportunities to create new partnerships – locally, regionally and statewide.

Ms. Renfro said since the marketing reality has changed, we need to determine how we put Randolph County in front of our target audiences. She said that new project sources come mostly through the Department of Commerce or a broker. Many counties now plan a focused marketing effort by knocking on doors of targeted companies. Ms. Renfro suggested the reallocation of the County’s regional marketing funds from Piedmont Triad Partnership to the EDC. She said the EDC can use their website and social media more effectively to reach non-traditional audiences, use key allies, rural marketing groups and organizations. The EDC has created a YouTube channel and other videos are planned.

Ms. Renfro stated that our incentive return on investment has been very good and presented a historical summary of County incentives from 1994 through 2013, as follows:

Historical Summary 1994-2013

Job Creation	2,851
Investment	\$712,115,225
Total Incentive Promised	\$14,718,289
Total Incentive Paid to Date	\$9,128,239
Outside Financial Assistance	\$16,758,383
Total Projects	33 companies / 4 have left
Cost Per New Job	\$5,162
Direct Tax Base Per Incentive Dollar	\$48.38
State & Federal Grant Per Local \$1	\$1.13
Total Infrastructure Funded	\$10,309,000 (local + state + federal)

She said that the performance based incentive program delivers a high return on investment, but the County may want to look at tweaking the current plan. Two possibilities are 1) creating a revolving loan fund with a minimum of \$500,000 and 2) modifying the State's Building Re-use Grant Program for vacant buildings.

Ms. Renfro said that the Reserve Fund is a great tool for the County. In 2005, the Board agreed to set aside one cent on the tax rate for four years for economic development to be used for incentives and product development; the fund was funded for three years. The current balance available is \$425,390. She said that we need to create a designated funding mechanism to sustain the fund.

She stated that from the "product" standpoint we have to look at the company's perspective of location and available labor force.

Redevelopment is a good way to market old sites and reusable or re-purposed buildings because utilities are already in place as well as road or railway infrastructure. Ms. Renfro said partnering with a municipality to market this is a possibility. There is a higher return on investment since the infrastructure is in place.

The State grant for the building reuse program has allowed for seven buildings to be reused in Randolph County, which created 437 jobs. Ms. Renfro suggested that it might be feasible for local governments (county along with municipalities) to expand this program for site and building redevelopment. After discussion, the Commissioners agreed that the Heath Road site is a priority to market.

Ms. Renfro said the mega site impact could result in 2,000 direct jobs; 3,517 ancillary jobs; additional supplier locations; infrastructure capacities; increases for public safety, housing, schools and roads; as well as, an increase in the tax base. Ms. Renfro said that we must prepare now to be ready for any opportunity from either of the two potential mega sites. The eastern portion of Randolph County is positioned to benefit from either the Greensboro-Liberty or Chatham sites.

She said that "talent" is the new hot word in economic development. Workforce demographics, education and training, the skills gap and the changing of job preferences are all important components and that we have made great progress because of the Commissioners' support and the business and education partnerships. She reported that the unemployment rate is 6.6% and 4,695 people are unemployed. She praised RCC for efforts to continue to provide training to the workforce that is needed.

Ms. Renfro said that the Triad has the second largest interstate highway system in the US, therefore, many are passing through, but asked, "How do we get them to stay and what strategies will leverage highways for economic development?" Other key infrastructures are the water resources of the Randleman Lake, City of Asheboro, and Town of Ramseur reservoirs; the regional landfill and access to municipal sewer.

How do we transform water resources to strategic assets for economic development? Ms. Renfro said that we need to identify and target water dependent business & industries, such as food and beverage processing; textile industries; and pharmaceutical and chemical companies.

We also should target non-industrial businesses, as well as, companies that focus on transportation equipment, distribution and logistics.

The proposed regional landfill has a competitive advantage in economic development as a cost advantage for existing industries and is a strategic advantage for new companies.

In closing Ms. Renfro reviewed what she deemed the needs are, as follows:

Priority Actions

- Reallocate current budgeted funds once paid to the Piedmont Triad Partnership to EDC
- Start planning process for ancillary development from either proposed mega site
- Focus on redevelopment of high value sites such as the former Goodyear site and partner with Asheboro to redevelop this high priority site or partner with other municipalities for other sites.
- Target focus on large water customers for county water allocation of Randleman Reservoir

Mid-term actions

- Look for designated funding source for economic development reserve fund and suggested several options: ½-cent on property tax rate, dedicated funding from franchise fee, revolving loan fund, land bank options, building reuse grants at the local level
- Prioritize and leverage partnerships with municipalities on product development including redevelopment
- Target non-industrial projects for job growth – may require alternate incentive tools

Ongoing long-term strategies

- Utilize existing infrastructure to spur and accommodate future growth
- Capitalize on the county's abundant water resources
- Improve site readiness for priority sites
- Maintain dedicated funding stream for economic development
- Broaden search beyond industrial to wider range of investments

Employee Wellness Initiatives

Stacy Griffin, Human Resources Director, presented an update on the employee wellness programs, saying that the benefits of having one is that it helps control healthcare costs; decreases absenteeism; increases productivity, employee retention and morale; produces fewer work-related injuries, workers comp claims and disability claims; prospective employees are more easily attracted; and it enhances the community image of the County. From the health screenings it was determined that weight, cholesterol and blood pressure were the top health risks for County employees. Ms. Griffin summarized the Wellness Program's progress, how the County is supporting the wellness goals and the programs the Wellness Committee is working on for the upcoming fiscal year. The wellness health plan goals include continuing to provide wellness education. The County has paid for many aspects of the program with a \$15,000 grant that was received from CIGNA in 2012/2013 and 2013/2014. Even with the additional costs of screenings and health coaching, the health plan is currently operating approximately \$350,000 under last year.

Ms. Griffin said that she wanted to continue to move forward with the Wellness Program, but it takes resources to coordinate and plan the numerous activities, manage the multiple plan

offerings (HSA/PPO), manage ancillary relationships (Hope Center/Prevo) and requested the Commissioners consider a Wellness Coordinator position in the upcoming budget.

Ms. Griffin stated that the Wellness Program will begin revenue generation July 1, 2014 and will generate at least \$55,800, which will be more than sufficient to fund a Wellness Coordinator and fund all wellness activities should the County not receive the \$15,000 Cigna Wellness Grant in 2014/2015.

Fire Department Issues

Aimee Scotton, Associate County Attorney, said Randolph County is responsible for providing fire protection to its citizens by contracting with local fire departments for their services. She said current contracts are outdated and need to be expanded to more fully reflect the County's expectations. A committee was formed, comprised of Ms. Scotton, Emergency Services Director Donovan Davis, County Fire Marshal Rick Davis, Tabernacle Fire Chief Brent Powell, Randleman Fire Chief Marty Leonard and Liberty Fire Chief J.R. Beard. Agreements from other counties were reviewed during several meetings.

Ms. Scotton reviewed the details of the contract with the Commissioners and highlighted the major components. Once the Board has reviewed and approved the contract content, the new contract will be sent to each of the fire chiefs for signatures by July 1, 2014.

Ms. Scotton stated that the Level Cross Fire Department had requested to be changed to a fire service district and asked the Board to consider changing all the remaining fire districts to fire service districts.

Break

At 2:47 p.m., the Board recessed for a short break.

Retreat Resumed

At 3:00 p.m., the retreat resumed.

Tax Reappraisal Update

Debra Hill, Tax Collector, stated there had been 800 requests for appeals due to the reappraisal. Some parcels show an increase and some a decrease in the value. She presented the Commissioners with a reappraisal analysis and map showing increases and decreases by percentage.

Update on Capital Replacement Program

Assistant County Manager/Finance Officer Will Massie said that the County continues to have a backlog of capital replacement needs such as roofs, HVAC and vehicles. During the recession, the County delayed capital projects, hiring staff, replacing vehicles or anything that added to the debt. He reminded the Commissioners that the fund balance will be down to 20% this year and advised not to deplete it any further. He stated that County departments still lack a recurring financial resource for capital needs and those needs should be addressed. Mr. Massie presented the following proposed Capital Replacement Schedule summary:

Estimated Costs By Year

	<u>FY 13-14</u>	<u>FY 14-15</u>	<u>FY 15-16</u>	<u>FY 16-17</u>	<u>FY 17-18</u>
Capital Costs					

Department equipment	\$ 556,495	\$ 209,871	\$ 580,441	\$ 342,057	\$ 485,154
Vehicles	1,107,617	1,126,767	991,267	1,165,467	1,066,267
Countywide technology	522,671	382,420	469,091	544,966	531,805
Building maintenance	185,000	366,500	137,500	2,500	50,500
	<u>\$ 2,371,783</u>	<u>\$ 2,085,558</u>	<u>\$ 2,178,299</u>	<u>\$ 2,054,990</u>	<u>\$ 2,133,726</u>
Existing funding (patrol cars & ambulances)	\$ 801,417	\$ 801,417	\$ 801,417	\$ 801,417	\$ 801,417
Additional Funding needed for Capital Replacement and Facility Maintenance	<u>\$ 1,570,366</u>	<u>\$ 1,284,141</u>	<u>\$ 1,376,882</u>	<u>\$ 1,253,573</u>	<u>\$ 1,332,309</u>

Mr. Massie presented the following debt service requirements for 2013-14, stating that the schools are 90% of the total.

Randolph Co Schools	\$11,113,404
Asheboro City Schools	1,390,665
RCC Training Facility	277,136
County Buildings	
New Courthouse	934,221
Mental Health Bldg - Walker Ave	80,260
Seagrove Library	79,454
DSS, Archdale Bldg	24,974
Cardiac Monitors	88,240
Water Projects	
Water rights -PTRWA	555,571
Water Lines	<u>209,214</u>
	<u>\$14,753,139</u>

He also presented an analysis of education appropriation and related funding sources for 2013-2014 fiscal year budget.

Mr. Massie recommended using the unrestricted portion of sales tax from one of the following options to establish a funding source to address the capital needs of County departments:

- Option 1 match Article 46 (same as RCC) \$ 2,095,409
- Option 2 match restricted portion of Article 42 \$ 3,107,342
- Option 3 match total restricted for schools \$ 4,661,013

County Commissioners asked questions of Mr. Massie about the proposal and indicated that they like the concept of setting money aside to begin working on the existing needs of County

facilities. Mr. Massie said that if we start addressing the backlog of the capital needs of the county departments, we could be caught up within five years.

Facilities Committee Report

Paxton Arthurs, Public Works Director, presented the Facilities Committee Report and reviewed the current building/planning projects.

- Ambulance base with a two-bedroom station and a one-bay garage located in the vicinity of Wheatmore High School in Trinity.
- Ambulance base with a two-bedroom station and a one-bay garage located on the corner of High Pine Church Road and Strieby Church Road to service the south west quadrant of the County.
- Emergency Services Headquarters: Mr. Arthurs said that the Facilities Committee chose an architect for sizing and conceptual design, developed a Building Committee, went through the request for qualifications process and received seven submissions. The Committee interviewed three architectural firms for the Emergency Services headquarters: Little Diversified Architectural Consulting; Moser, Mayer, Phoenix Associates; and Smith Sinnett Architecture. Little Diversified Architectural Consulting was chosen and they have provided a conceptual design packet with an estimated cost between \$10,200,000 and \$12,900,000 for construction.
- New Animal Shelter: Mr. Arthurs stated that the Facilities Committee went through the same process for a proposed new animal shelter and received five submissions and interviewed three architectural firms: Bacon Group Architecture, Daggett + Grigg Architects and ESPA Architects and Planners. They chose Daggett + Grigg Architects based on their experience in building animal shelters. Daggett + Grigg Architects have worked with a company called shelterplanners.com on previous projects. Mr. Arthurs presented the results of the needs assessment study completed by Daggett + Grigg Architects and shelterplanners.com. The study showed that based on an average 14-day length of stay and the number of animals the shelter processes, a 12,100 square foot building would be needed to meet all animal welfare rules, at a construction cost of 2.7-3.2 million dollars for the base building. They also recommended the addition of a sally port for the containment of animals as they are brought in. Mr. Arthurs said that the proposal is designed to meet the County's needs for at least 20 years and is designed for future expansion.

Mr. Arthur said that an addition/upgrade was not recommended to the existing shelter, but thought it be best left operational while a new shelter is under construction and could continue to be used for large animals and seasonal peak overflow.

He said the proposed site of the new shelter was at the corner of Henley Country and County Land Road and would require rezoning and grading.

Mr. Arthurs reviewed other potential projects the Facilities Committee had reviewed.

- Two additional solid waste convenience sites; one would be located in Trinity and one just north of Seagrove. The proposed contract with the solid waste facility operator of the proposed regional landfill includes these sites.
- Additional ambulance bases

- Repair/Renovation of the Old County Home, a designated historic landmark which is currently used for storage (8000 sq. ft. of available space that could be used for offices, but does have asbestos under the building and cannot be disturbed). Cost could be well over \$300,000.
- Renovation of the Annex Building. (It is located beside historic courthouse. The upstairs is used for the Day Reporting Center and downstairs is currently used for classrooms and storage.) Probation and parole has inquired about additional space due to rule changes that require private offices instead of cubicle space and additional employees are being added next fiscal year.
- Child Support Building (currently a leased building). County could possibly receive State reimbursement for a County-owned building.
- Juvenile Day Reporting Center Relocation – They are currently in a 3,800 sq. ft. office located next to DSS. Their relocation would free up space for DSS.

After discussion, the Commissioners asked that the Facilities Committee look at the Emergency Services headquarters and animal shelter project again for other construction options.

Emergency Services Modernization

Donovan Davis, Emergency Services Director, said that his department has several issues due to understaffing. He said that the 9-1-1 call volume has increased by 3,214 transactions, EMS call volume increased by 1,873 calls and transports increased by 1,477 calls since last year. There is an average of 17 calls per day that go unanswered on an initial 9-1-1 call because all Telecommunicators are on other calls. The citizen hangs up and the first available Telecommunicator calls the citizen back to determine if they need emergency assistance. He stated that Randolph County Emergency Services does not come close to meeting required standards to answer and dispatch calls within 90 seconds. These standards affect 9-1-1 funding, State and Federal grant funding, fire department insurance ratings, law enforcement accreditation, and more. Mr. Davis said that since 2009, calls have gone from 16,178 to 19,212 calls in a year with the same amount of staff to handle the volume. He noted that we have seven paramedic ambulances plus access to Ash-Rand Rescue and Piedmont Triad Ambulance. The County has run out of ambulances to respond to calls 316 times since the issue was last discussed with the Board a couple years ago. When this happens, we have to rely on surrounding counties to respond.

Mr. Davis gave the following details regarding the EMS ambulance bases:

- Randleman base is complete except for some landscaping.
- Trinity base location is being investigated and funding is available from the sale of the former Randleman base.
- Uwharrie base land has been purchased, surveyed and currently completing permitting requirements.
- A Coleridge/Erect base is needed to improve service time to the southeast portion of county.
- Liberty base, located at Liberty's old fire department, needs many repairs. It is not a County building.

Mr. Davis gave a summary of all the capital needs for Emergency Services with a hope to have all construction finished by 2016-17, as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|
| ➤ New Uwharrie Base | \$ 260,000 |
| ➤ Cardiac Monitor for Uwharrie Base | \$ 40,000 |

➤ Liberty EMS Base <i>replacement (excluding property)</i>	\$ 260,000
➤ Three Fire Investigation <i>replacement</i> vehicles	\$ 81,000
➤ One EM replacement vehicle	\$ 35,000
➤ One EMS <i>replacement</i> Supervisor vehicle	\$ 35,000
➤ One EMS <i>replacement</i> Supervisor vehicle (utility)	\$ 45,000
➤ Two ambulances (<i>in addition to annual allotment</i>)	\$ 300,000
➤ New Southeast EMS Base (<i>ex: property / incl: card mon.</i>)	\$ 300,000
➤ New Headquarters	\$ 12,834,366
➤ Emergency Notification System (<i>per year</i>)	\$ 40,000
TOTAL	\$ 14,230,366

Mr. Davis added that staffing is a priority, listing the needs for January – June 2015 (then annually thereafter), as follows:

- Six 9-1-1 positions /Five Call-Taker Positions = \$105,283 (\$210,566 annually) and one Assistant Communications Supervisor = \$ 15,185 (\$49,272 annually).
- Six Paramedic positions (*Uwharrie Base*) 1/2015 – 6/2015=\$163,413 (\$326,825 annually)

Mr. Davis presented the proposed new fee schedule for the Commissioners to consider during the budget approval process providing details that show Randolph County is still less or in line with surrounding counties on the same fees. The increases will ensure Randolph County's compliance with Medicare guidelines of collecting the 20% obligatory co-pay and will maximize payments from insurance companies.

Commissioner Haywood suggested that two additional cents on the tax rate be used to address Emergency Service needs. Commissioner Lanier asked that figures reflecting what two cents could accomplish be presented at the May meeting to help with their budget preparations.

Adjournment

At 5:32 p.m., there being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

J. Harold Holmes

Darrell L. Frye

Phil Kemp

Stan Haywood

Arnold Lanier

Amanda Varner, Deputy Clerk to the Board