

Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

March 17, 2007

The Randolph County Board of Commissioners met in special session at 8:00 a.m. at the Asheboro Hampton Inn for a Planning Retreat. Commissioners Holmes, Frye, Kemp, Lanier and Haywood were present, as well as County Manager Richard Wells; Finance Officer Will Massie; County Attorney Alan Pugh; Associate County Attorney Aimee Scotton; Public Works Director David Townsend, III; Personnel Director Kim Newsom; Maintenance Director James Chriscoe; Planning Director Hal Johnson; and Cheryl Ivey, Clerk to the Board.

Chairman Holmes called the meeting to order.

Finance Officer Will Massie gave an update on sales tax revenues, saying that currently, we are running 1.45 percent above budget. With 2007 being a revaluation year, Mr. Massie explained that 49¢ per \$100 valuation is an estimated revenue neutral property tax rate. However, the debt from the Teachey School renovations and the Providence Grove High School financing in 2006 and the new debt that will be issued this year for the new Trinity area high school and the Hwy. 22 water line will likely push the tax rate another 5¢.

The Commissioners discussed Randolph Community College's request from the Board's previous meeting for a \$6 million building to house the County's Early College High School program. Since the County's borrowing capacity will be pushed to the limit for several years, due primarily to funding construction of two new high schools, the Board discussed the possibility of leasing a modular unit for a few years instead of building a permanent structure.

Mr. Massie recommended that the County's new internal auditor work with personnel from the County's fire departments to train them in acceptable accounting procedures for keeping and preparing financial records in order for all fire departments to be able to provide annual audits to the County. He said that he is proposing a 4-year phase-in plan for this program.

Kim Newsom, County Personnel Director, told the Board that thanks to the 6.4% across-the-board salary increase last year, the County is catching up in the 13-county market that he uses for salary comparison studies. He recommended a 3.5% increase this year and also asked the Board to consider a 401-K plan for non-sworn employees, starting with 2%, effective October 1.

Mr. Massie said that Medicaid costs are still rising, but not as fast as in years' past. Medicaid costs for the County in the new budget are projected at about \$374,000 more than this year. Although the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners continues to lobby for the Counties for relief from the Medicaid burden, there is no sure sign that the state will take over the Counties' portion.

The Commissioners discussed the June budget meeting schedule and asked the Clerk to place this item on the April meeting agenda for consideration and adoption.

Hal Johnson and David Townsend discussed the County's plans for future water lines. Mr. Johnson said that water lines would have a major impact on the County's growth management plan, changing some rural growth areas to secondary growth areas. He also proposed that the County consider creating a designation of transitional growth corridors. Three areas that Mr. Johnson identified for this new designation are the areas that are tentatively earmarked for possible future water line installation: U.S. 64 from Asheboro to Ramseur, U.S. 311 from Randleman to Archdale, and N.C. 49 from Asheboro to the Municipal Airport and Tot Hill Farm. Other possible transitional growth corridors might be U.S. 421, U.S. 220 Bypass South from Asheboro to Pinewood Country Club and several sections of Seagrove.

This new designation would give Commissioners some flexibility to allow for commercial and industrial growth in areas that are now largely residential agricultural. They would come with requirements for buffers and landscaping to lessen the impact on established neighborhoods.

Mr. Townsend said that work is moving ahead on the N.C. 22 water line to Providence Grove High School. Bids should be opened in April and awarded in May. He recommended that the Board consider extending water lines from Asheboro east along U.S. 64 to the Blue Mist restaurant, south along N.C. 49 to Tot Hill Farm Road and connecting with lines from the Seagrove-Ulah Metropolitan Water District, and along U.S. 311 north from Asheboro to Commonwealth Road. He said that County government could become a “water bank,” by funding the installation of lines, then turning those lines over to municipalities to operate and maintain. The municipalities would then reimburse the County over time through user fees. He estimated that all these projects would cost about \$30 million.

The Board asked Mr. Townsend and the County Manager to prepare a 10-year water plan and present the plan to the Board at their May meeting.

James Chriscoe, County Maintenance Director, gave a report on County facilities, saying that the County Office Building will soon need a new roof and air conditioning units. The wood shingle façade at the Social Services building will need replacing soon. Also, before the old County courthouse can be useful again, it must undergo asbestos abatement.

Commissioner Frye reported that construction of the recreation facilities at the Randleman Lake is underway. However, the timeline for filling the lake has been pushed out one year because High Point city government has failed to install lines for treated water. Now that the lake is almost filled, High Point will have to finish its work using a barge. He suggested that the Board tour the lake and dam soon.

County Manager Richard Wells suggested changing the County seal to a more up-to-date, attractive and recognizable one.

Mr. Massie said that the County’s borrowing capacity will be maxed out after the 2007 financing, until 2010 or 2011. He asked the Board to consider any additional projects that they might want funded in the 2007 COPS issue as he will need to go before the Local Government Commission for approval soon.

The Commissioners said that they would like to have another planning retreat this year—perhaps in the fall, where they would like to hear reports from all County departments.

The Board briefly discussed the possibility of school consolidation. They suggested appointing an education task force to study the issue some time after the new fiscal year.

There being no further business, the Board adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

J. Harold Holmes

Darrell L. Frye

Phil Kemp

Stan Haywood

Arnold Lanier

Cheryl A. Ivey, Clerk to the Board