

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)
)
COUNTY OF STOKES)
)

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS
STOKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DANBURY, NORTH CAROLINA
MARCH 29, 2007

The Board of Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a recessed meeting (recessed from March 26, 2007) in the Commissioners' Chambers of the Ronald Wilson Reagan Memorial Building (Administrative Building) located in Danbury, North Carolina on Thursday, March 29, 2007 at 2:00 pm with the following members present:

Chairman Leon Inman
Vice-Chairman Jimmy Walker
Commissioner Ron Carroll
Commissioner Ernest Lankford
Commissioner Stanley Smith

County Personnel in Attendance:
Interim County Manager/Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins
Finance Director Julia Edwards

Chairman Leon Inman called the recessed meeting to order.

Commissioner Smith delivered the invocation.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT-GOVERNING BODY-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Inman opened the meeting by inviting the citizens in attendance to join the Board with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Inman welcomed Mr. Bryan Steen who will take the position of County Manager on April 16, 2007.

Goals – Planning Session

Chairman Inman opened meeting by presenting Board members with documentation with the following goals and visions that the Board had discussed at previous planning

sessions:

Goals -

- User Friendly Departments
 - Interim Manager informed Department Heads of User Friendly Departments at staff meeting on Monday – January 8th
 - Departments Heads scheduled to meet with Board of Commissioners on Monday, February 12th
- Recreation
 - Address recreational needs that are not being currently addressed around the County
 - In-house recreational department for recreation and parks
 - Need for recreation centers around the county for the youth
- Legal
 - Comparison of staff attorney versus outside contract attorney
- Utilization of County Owned Property
 - Evaluate all county owned property especially property not being utilized
 - Needs assessment for space for county departments
- Vacant County Manager's Position
- Economic Development
 - Create infrastructure
 - Recruit new businesses
 - Evaluate and determine places for future business growth and assess what is needed to those areas to make more attractive
 - Evaluate #311 corridor, Pinnacle area, and #65 Germanton/Walnut Cove areas
 - Regional utilities systems for water and sewer
 - Needs assessment relating to adequate parks, libraries, schools, arts, healthcare, etc.
 - Importance to be independent from other counties for water, waste disposal, etc.
 - Water intake from the Dan River
 - More involvement with Water and Sewer Authority
- Evaluation of solid waste issues with the county
 - Current and future needs
 - Annual waste disposal costs
- Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital
 - Evaluate all options to provide the best medical facilities and services for the entire county
- Health Services Alliance
 - Evaluate the delivery of health services in Stokes County
- Veterans Services
 - Need for veterans clinic in Stokes County
- Mental Health
 - Evaluate to determine if residents are receiving the best mental

- health services available
 - Evaluate all mental health services
 - Evaluate funding being allocated versus services being provided
 - Need to express concerns to State Legislators regarding the recent mental health reform
- Staff Personnel Classification and Salary Study
 - Structured Salary Study
 - Classification Study
- EMS
 - Possibility of locating EMS stations in Fire Departments
 - Evaluation of current EMS stations – particularly Pinnacle where two units are currently being housed
 - Need to offer best EMS services available to the citizens
 - Evaluate land on Chestnut Grove for possible station
 - Evaluate the number of Convalescent calls in Stokes County
 - Evaluate current EMS collection policy
 - Further discussion of Unpaid invoices being turned over to Tax Department for collection
- Tourism
 - Evaluate the need for a motel/conference center in or near Danbury
 - Evaluate the future funding for the Regional Tourism Initiative
 - Evaluate benefit Stokes County is receiving from the Regional Tourism Initiative
- Historical Preservation
 - Assess historical buildings in Stokes County
- District Plan for Electing Commissioners and School Board Members
 - Establish a Blue Ribbon Commission to study District System for Stokes County
- Schools
 - Identify County's position
 - Join with School Board to develop a plan for current and future needs
 - Talk with Local Government Commission to determine County's financial status for Bond Referendum
 - School Construction
- Community College in Stokes County
 - Need for a stand alone community college facility in Stokes County with its own identity
 - Feasibility study for Old Prison Camp site for a possible location for community college
 - Seek outside funding for facility
- Compensatory Time/Holiday Time/Vacation Time Payoff
 - Evaluate County's current policy regarding carrying over compensatory and holiday time
- County Vision
- Strategies to Achieve Goals

Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins presented information to the Board from Department

Heads which documented “user friendly” methods currently being performed in county offices.

Chairman Inman requested Board members to comment on what he feels that the Board should focus on during the meeting.

Commissioner Carroll noted the following:

- Get down to specifics – exactly what are we going to do
- The need for an inventory of county owned property and what it is currently being used for and who is located in each facility
- The need to find out what are the additional space needs of the County
- The need to start to find out what we have, what we need, and what we plan to do

Commissioner Lankford noted the following:

- Space needs for the total county – review of what the county has available
- Space for the Board of Elections
- Retirement of Elections Director and resignation of Deputy Elections Director
- Possible state election in November 2007- need for plans for replacement of Elections Director

Interim County Manager Darlene Bullins informed the Board that Elections Director Robbins had planned to include a request for a Elections Director Trainee position in the upcoming budget year. The Deputy Elections Director has tentative plans to resign in September 2007, thus allowing the Elections Director to hire the position in early October.

The Board discussed the needs of the Elections Department.

The Board discussed potential use of the third floor of the Administrative Building.

The Board discussed other available space for Forsyth Technical Community College, (FTCC) possibly placing FTCC at the old prison camp location.

The Board reviewed the following county owned property:

- FTCC space located in the lower level of the Government Center
- Old Prison Camp located at Meadows
- Old Paces Building located above the Hospital which currently houses the YMCA satellite office

- Community Services Building located in Danbury
- Old DSS Building currently being leased to Stokes Safe Shelter

Vice Chairman Walker noted the following:

- Identify the space needed by the County
- Old Prison Camp property
- Stand alone facility for Forsyth Technical Community College

Vice Chairman Walker noted that at the last Forsyth Tech Advisory Committee, recommendation was made that Stokes County find an interim facility within a year and a half with a target goal of having a stand-alone satellite campus within five years.

The Board discussed possible locations to relocate FTCC for an interim basis such as any vacant space at one of the high schools, current capacity of classes at the Government Center location, and the amount of space needed by FTCC.

Mr. L.G. Tilley noted the possibly of obtaining a FEMA Grant for renovations cost to relocate Emergency Management offices in order to free up space in the Government Center Complex.

Mr. Steen noted the need to inventory the number of classes, hours that classes are held, future plans of FTCC, and any other possible County location to house FTCC.

Commissioner Smith noted the following:

- Need to see some action
- Need for space for the District Attorney to house an attorney in Stokes County
- Need to use the available space at the Old Prison Camp location
- Courtroom C renovations

Interim County Manager Darlene Bullins noted that the renovations plans for Courtroom “C” will be presented to the Board in April.

Chairman Inman noted that the new County Manager would be on board April 16th and could begin inventory of county property after the budget process.

Chairman Inman noted the need for Stokes County to have a stand-alone facility for Forsyth Tech Community College. Chairman Inman noted that Stokes County is the largest county in the State left without a stand-alone campus.

Chairman Inman requested input from the Board regarding a stand alone FTCC facility at the Old Prison Camp location in Meadows.

Commissioner Smith noted the following:

- 100% support to have a renovated facility for FTCC at the Old Prison Camp location
- Location is the crossroads of Stokes County
- Valuable space at the location that is not being used
- Free up space in the Government Center

Commissioner Carroll noted the following:

- No problems with the Meadows site for a FTCC facility
- Open to having an architect and engineer assess the location and current facility for preliminary suggestions and cost
- Perfect location for a FTCC facility
- Questions renovating the current facility
- Need to have the right facility for FTCC

Chairman Inman noted the following:

- Reiterated the need to have the right facility for FTCC
- Need for a stand alone facility for FTCC

Commissioner Lankford noted the following:

- Possibly introduce a local bill to request funding for a stand alone facility for FTCC
- Need to evaluate the Old Prison Camp location for a possible FTCC stand alone facility

The Board discussed the need to pursue the possibly of obtaining state funding for a stand alone facility.

Mr. Sam Hill, FTCC Advisory Council, noted the recent tour of the Meadows facility with FTCC representatives. Mr. Hill noted that concerns were expressed by FTCC

representatives regarding the current facilities. Commissioner Carroll noted that careful planning would be needed to evaluate renovation costs versus new facility costs.

Commissioner Carroll noted the need to investigate possible grant funding from The Golden Leaf Foundation.

Commissioner Lankford volunteered to chair a group to identify space needs for FTCC, evaluate the Old Prison Camp location for a possible stand alone campus for FTCC, and explore possible funding.

Fire Commission – Appointments

Mr. L.G. Tilley spoke to the Board regarding the deadline for appointments to Fire Commission for the upcoming budget process.

Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins presented information to the Board regarding the schedule for the upcoming service district budget work sessions.

Mr. Tilley explained the current Fire Commission budget process and expressed the urgency of the Fire Commission appointments.

The Board discussed the current Fire Commission budget process, the deadline for Fire Commission appointments that was discussed at the March 26th meeting, major fire department expenditures not being approved by the Board of Commissioners, and the eight-page Fire Commission Guidelines approved by the Fire Commission and a previous Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Carroll expressed the following concerns regarding the eight-page Fire Commission Guidelines:

- The legality of the document
- Holding executive sessions to discuss budget items
- Fire Commission is a public body governed by the Open Meetings Law

- Request for the new County Manager and County Attorney to review the document
- Current budget process bypasses the County Manager
- Document is of public policy
- Fire Commission is a public body created by the Board of Commissioners

Mr. Tilley noted that the Fire Commission would change their procedures to follow the Open Meetings Law and reiterated the hard work put into the development of the Fire Commission Guidelines. Mr. Tilley requested the Board return issues to the Fire Commission regarding the Fire Commission Guidelines. Commissioner Carroll noted the law requires that any budget session be discussed in open session. Mr. Tilley noted that if the document is not legal, he would be the first one to fight for the document to be legal.

Mr. Tilley reiterated the need for appointments to the Fire Commission in order to proceed with the fiscal year 2007-08 budget process. Mr. Tilley noted that the Fire Commission had recommended the following individuals for appointment to the Fire Commission:

- Clifford Hall
- Tommy Carter
- Mike Pell

Mr. Tilley requested the Board consider the appointments needed for the Fire Commission in order to continue the scheduled budget process

The Board discussed appointments to the Fire Commission.

Commissioner Lankford nominated the following to serve on the Fire Commission:

- Clifford Hall
- Tommy Carter
- Mike Pell

The Board would consider the appointments during the April 9th meeting.

Chairman Inman reiterated that the Board had no issues with the nominations from from the Fire Commission, but did have concerns regarding legal issues of the eight-page Fire Commission Guidelines.

Cooperative Extension-Director's Position

Commissioner Smith discussed the vacancy of the Cooperative Extension Director. Commissioner Smith noted that Stokes County has an opportunity to obtain an excellent Crops Extension Agent to serve as the Cooperative Extension Director and Crops Agent for Stokes County. Commissioner Smith also noted the need for a full time Cooperative Extension Director for Stokes County. The candidate is currently working for Forsyth County. The Board discussed the Cooperative Extension Director's vacancy. Cooperative Extension Director Mark Tucker – Forsyth County is currently serving as Interim Cooperative Extension Director for Stokes County. Interim County Manager Darlene Bullins noted that Yadkin County has decided to discontinue sharing their Cooperative Extension Director with Stokes County.

The Board discussed the need for the County to have a full time Cooperative Extension Director who could possibly serve as another agent such as Director/Crops Agent if funding is available. Interim Manager Bullins noted that the previous Director had discussed requesting a full time Director position for the upcoming fiscal year.

Chairman Inman noted that there is no one currently working in the Stokes County Cooperative Extension Office who is qualified and interested in the Director's position.

Commissioner Smith volunteered to follow up on the Cooperative Extension Director's position.

Vice Chairman Walker requested to discuss the following:

- County recreational needs
- Economic Development issues
- Personnel Classification and Salary Study
- District Committee
- Historical Preservation
- Tourism/Recreation
-

Personnel Classification and Salary Study

Commissioners Carroll and Lankford noted that the Committee is currently in the process of researching several issues pertaining to the current Salary Classification Plan.

District Committee

The Board briefly discussed May 8th as cutoff date for District Committee nominations. The Board unanimously agreed that May 8th will be the cutoff date for District Committee nominations.

Economic Development

Vice Chairman Walker discussed the upcoming retirement of the Economic Development Director. The Board discussed identifying prime locations for economic development and making those areas more attractive for development and being more aggressive in recruiting certain types of business that will work well in Stokes County.

Mr. Steen spoke briefly regarding industrial locations in Stokes County, Golden Leaf Foundation, and positive relationships with the cities and towns within the County to recruit economic development to Stokes County.

The Board discussed the need for water and sewer to attract economic development, the need to identify potential sites for economic development, and the need to plan for the future.

Tourism

Vice Chairman Walker noted the need to incorporate Tourism into the economic development plan.

Recreation

Vice Chairman Walker noted the need to inventory recreational needs of the County. Vice Chairman Walker noted that several citizens had mentioned issues with the lack of recreational opportunities in certain parts of the County.

Commissioner Carroll agreed that the County needed an inventory of recreational programs in the county (YMCA programs, leagues, community programs, etc), available parks, and the total recreational opportunities in the county.

Vice Chairman Walker volunteered to inventory the recreational programs and parks in Stokes County.

Schools

Chairman Inman noted that he had received an invitation from Chairperson Sonya Cox that the Board of Education would like to have a special joint meeting to begin looking at present and future needs of the schools. This would be a good opportunity for both Boards to begin a collaborative effort to work together toward a plan for the future.

Finance Director Julia Edwards noted that information from the Local Government Commission (LGC) had indicated that LGC would like the County's fund balance to be at least ½ the statewide average which is currently 27%. Director Edwards noted that LGC offered to meet with the Board or hold a telephone conference call when the Board started planning for a future bond referendum.

Chairman Inman presented the following dates for consideration: April 18th or April 19th. Chairman Inman noted that the new Manager will be available for either date.

The Board discussed the Superintendent's proposed renovations at the Meadowbrook facility.

The Board unanimously agreed to schedule a joint meeting with the Board of Education for April 19th at 11:30 am at Germanton School.

Mental Health

Commissioner Carroll requested to further discuss the mental health issues in Stokes County.

The Board discussed the lack of communication between the different groups involved in providing mental health services in Stokes County.

The Board discussed the recent presentation from Stokes County Mental Health Association and the First Responders regarding mental health issues in Stokes County.

The Board discussed the current funding allocation to CenterPoint, allocation for the Stokes Opportunity Center, and current mental health services in Stokes County

Commissioner Carroll noted the need to find out what are we really getting for our allocation to CenterPoint.

Interim Manager Bullins noted that Triumph is currently pursuing an arrangement with Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital for space.

Chairman Inman volunteered to take the lead and further research the mental health needs in Stokes County. Chairman Inman reiterated the need to have answers before the next budget cycle.

Visions

Chairman Inman presented the following vision statements previously discussed by the Board:

- Stokes County a natural wonder of the Sauratown Mountains.
- Framing our future through agriculture, utilities, business, education, and tourism.
- Stokes County – North Carolina’s best kept secret.
- Stokes County the place to be.
- Stokes County to become the most outstanding county in this area.
- Stokes County is a beautiful place with good, honest, hard working people
- Stokes County will be a great place to live, work, and play by preserving our natural aesthetic heritage and embracing the future.

The Board discussed the submitted vision statements.

The Board discussed the following additional vision statements:

- What do we want Stokes County to be.
- Growing through the quality of our people, our county’s excellent location in this area, our natural beauty and our willingness to work with new and existing businesses.
- Stokes County to be the place where you want to be – not just the place you want to be from.
- A desirable place to live, work, and play.
- Stokes County will be a great place to live, work, by
- The County that is open to agricultural, utilities, business, education and tourism.
- Growing our future through agricultural, business, education, and tourism.
- Stokes County a great place now and becoming better for the future.
- Stokes County a natural wonder to work, live and play and getting better.
- Stokes County will become the most outstanding County in this area through agricultural, business, education, and tourism.
- Stokes County will be a great place to live, work, and play by preserving our natural aesthetic beauty and embracing future growth and development by utilizing all available resources.
- Stokes County a great place to live, work and play and getting better.
- Stokes County the right place to live, work and play.
- Growing our future through agricultural, business, education and tourism.
- Stokes County a great place for the future and becoming better for the future.
- Stokes County a great place.
- Stokes County to become the most desirable county in this area to work, live and play in.
- Stokes County the gateway to the future.
- Stokes County you will love to live work and play here.

- Stokes County becoming the most outstanding county in this area through agricultural, utilities, business, education and tourism.
- Stokes County becoming the most outstanding county in this area.
- Stokes County you will love being here.
- Stokes County you will be glad you are here.
- Stokes County to become the most outstanding county in the area.
- Stokes County will become the most outstanding county in this area to live, work, and play.
- Stokes County the right place to live, work, and play.

The Board further discussed the vision statement - Stokes County a great place to live, work, and play and getting better. The Board will continue discussion on a vision statement for Stokes County at a later meeting.

Fiscal Year 2007-08 Budget

The Board discussed the following regarding the upcoming 2007-08 budget process:

- Former Budget Director Dennis Thompson is available in an advisory capacity as needed
- Former Budget Director Dennis Thompson to serve as a resource for Bryan Steen if needed
- Mr. Steen to appoint his budget team
- Mr. Steen to make his recommendations to the Board
- Increase the fund balance
- Discussed the proposed budget calendar
- Decrease in budget amendments for the upcoming fiscal year

The Board noted to Mr. Steen that the proposed budget is his recommendation to Board of Commissioners.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Inman entertained a motion to adjourn the recessed meeting.

Vice Chairman Walker moved to adjourn the special session. Commissioner Smith seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Darlene M. Bullins
Clerk to the Board

J. Leon Inman
Chairman