

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)
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COUNTY OF STOKES)
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OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS
STOKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DANBURY, NORTH CAROLINA
OCTOBER 15, 2007

The Board of Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a Goals Planning Session - Overview in the Commissioners' Chambers of the Ronald Wilson Reagan Memorial Building (Administrative Building) located in Danbury, North Carolina on Monday, October 15, 2007 at 4:00 pm with the following members present:

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

County Personnel in Attendance:
County Manager K. Bryan Steen
Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins
Finance Director Julia Edwards

Chairman Leon Inman called the meeting to order.

Commissioner Lankford 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.

Goals Planning Session - Overview

Chairman Inman expressed his appreciation to the Board for their willingness to meet to review the Board's goals.

Chairman Inman requested Board members to note issues they would like to discuss.

Commissioner Carroll noted the following:

- Where are we going?
- What are we going to do?
- What are our plans?
- Economic Development
- Schools
- Forsyth Technical Community College
- County facilities and space issues

Commissioner Lankford noted the following:

- Making sure the County has a fund balance that will enable the county do accomplish its goals
- Economic Development
- Employee benefits
- Control spending
- County facilities and space issues – need for a plan

Finance Director Edwards noted that the audit is due in Raleigh by October 31, 2007 and plans are scheduled for the audit report to be delivered to the Board of Commissioners at the first meeting in November.

Vice Chairman Walker noted the following:

- Economic Development
- Schools
- Fund Balance
- Finding out where we are at relating to the goals – need for a progress report
- Would like to add county-wide internet connectivity to the goals
- Discussion to start planning to save valuable farmland
- Plans for river protection- Dan River

Commissioner Smith noted the following:

- Reopening Southwestern Service Center which has been opened – the need to continue to increase services at the Center
- Health Department Services – increasing services for the citizens of the County
- County owned facilities – best use of county property
- Fund Balance
- Location of EMS station at Sauratown Fire Department still viable
- Employee benefits
- Schools- Workforce Development
- Conclusion to the Fire Service District Funding Agreement

Chairman Inman noted the following:

- Echoed the sentiments of his fellow Commissioners
- Need to evaluate the on-going goals
- Need continuously to add to the on-going goals

Vice Chairman Walker noted that King City Manager has made reference wanting to start communication with the County regarding county utilities.

Fire Service District – Funding Agreements

Chairman Inman read correspondence received from Chairman Mike Merritt – Stokes County Fire & Rescue Association. Chairman Inman noted the following:

- Received a signed funding agreement from the Fire Departments in the Service District along with a revised 8-page document (Guidelines for Fire Commission) for the Commissioners’ approval
- Revised Guidelines incorporates the Open Meetings Laws
- Funding Agreements received are not the revised funding agreement approved by the Board of Commissioners

Chairman Inman directed County Manager Steen to review the submitted agreements.

Commissioner Carroll noted the Open Meeting Laws was not the only issue in 8-page document.

The Board discussed the positive feedback being received from citizens in the County regarding the fire service districts agreements.

Commissioner Carroll requested that the funding for paying the Fire Commissioners be transferred and paid from a line item in the Governing Body’s budget. This funding should not be allocated to the Stokes County Fire and Rescue Association, the Board of Commissioners created the Fire Commission.

County Manager Bryan Steen requested the Board to indicate their desire to have a budget amendment at the next meeting which would transfer the allocated amount currently in the Fire & Rescue Association budget for reimbursement to Fire Commissioners to a line item

in the Governing Body's budget.

The consensus of the Board was to have the County Manager present a budget amendment at the next meeting for the Board's consideration.

Vice Chairman Walker questioned what the Board needs to do to resolve the issue with the fire departments. Vice Chairman Walker noted the valuable service provided by these organizations.

The Board discussed the revisions made to the agreements, what steps to take next, and possibly providing factual information to the public.

County Manager Steen suggested placing a generic copy of the recently approved revised agreements along with factual information pertaining to fire service district funding on the county's website.

The consensus of the Board was to direct the County Manager to place a generic copy of the approved revised agreement along with factual information regarding this matter on the county's website.

Commissioner Carroll reiterated that the Board of Commissioners sets the tax rate along with the fire tax for Stokes County.

Chairman Inman stated that he would be willing to meet with any fire department to discuss the issues.

Schools

Chairman Inman noted a recent meeting with Chairperson Sonya Cox- Board of Education, Interim Superintendent Nelson Jessup and County Manager Bryan Steen, which was held to start discussion for a future bond referendum.

Chairman Inman presented a request received from Chairperson Sonya Cox- Board of Education to the Board regarding the need to update the OrEd Study. Interim Superintendent Jessup had requested (on behalf of the Board of Education) if the Board of Commissioners would consider funding half of the cost for an update to the OrEd Study. The cost of the update is estimated at \$6500 (County's share \$3250). The Board discussed the request from the Board of Education regarding the funding for the update. Vice Chairman Walker noted he would need more information regarding the update before making a decision. It was the consensus of the Board not to fund half of the cost (\$3250) of the OrEd Study update.

Commissioner Carroll noted that the Board of Education should submit their list of needs/projects and the Board would then decide what could be funded.

The Board discussed the growth in the County not only in the King area but other growing areas in the County.

Economic Development

Chairman Inman noted that the Economic Development Director would be retiring on October 31, 2007 at which time the County Manager would assume the role of Interim Economic Development Director.

County Manager Steen discussed his current role as Interim Health Director and the time involved with that department. Manager Steen did not have any idea how long this interim position would last.

Vice Chairman Walker noted the response he had received from the public regarding the elimination of the Economic Development Director in the adoption of the fiscal year 07-08 budget. Citizens have commented that the County needs to stress Economic Development in

the County.

The Board discussed the County Manager taking on another role while serving as Interim Health Director, current Economic Development in Stokes County, cost effective economic development in the County, and the status of the Economic Development Department when Mr. Morgan retires at the end of the month.

Commissioner Smith noted the need to look at reinstating the position as a full time position or a contract position.

Commissioner Lankford expressed his desire to wait until the current situation is resolved before making a decision to reinstate the full time position.

Commissioner Carroll noted the need to know what is being done and where we are as far as Economic Development in Stokes County. Commissioner Carroll noted the possibility of reinstating the Economic Development Director position as a full time position.

Vice Chairman Walker reiterated the need to have a full time Economic Development Director to continue to bring Economic Development into Stokes County to keep Stokes County citizens from having to leave Stokes County to work and to help the existing businesses in the County.

County Manager Steen further discussed his current role as Interim Health Director, overseeing Public Works/Utilities until the new Director comes on board, and being County Manager.

Commissioner Carroll noted that the projected savings of \$87,000 from Medicaid could be used to fund the position for the remainder of the fiscal year.

The majority of the Board requested the item be placed on the Discussion Agenda at the October 22nd meeting.

Vice Chairman Walker reiterated the need to have a full time Economic Development Director to keep the County moving in the right direction, to help plan for the future, and to help strengthen tourism in the County.

The Board discussed the feasibility study funded by the Water & Sewer Authority and the Board of Commissioners.

Chairman Inman, with full consent of the Board, directed the County Manager to schedule Golder Associates NC, Inc. for a future board meeting for a presentation update.

County Manager Steen updated the Board regarding the current provider MLP who is contracted by the Water and Sewer Authority to provide billing services to the County and service the water lines servicing the Germanton area. Manager Steen noted the new Public Works Director will be on board October 22nd has experience in water and sewer services and should be an asset to the Water and Sewer Authority.

Vice Chairman Walker noted another reason to reinstate the full time Economic Development Director position - to work with the Water and Sewer Authority to expand water and sewer in Stokes County.

Chairman Inman suggested a possible joint meeting with the Water and Sewer Authority at a future date to discuss the current and future water/sewer needs in Stokes County.

Commissioner Smith noted the recent feasibility study should help in obtaining grants for water and sewer projects.

Schools

Commissioner Carroll reiterated the need for the Board of Education to present their needs to this Board so that we can start looking at all funding options available to the County.

Chairman Inman noted after receiving the results of the fiscal year 2006-07 audit in November, the need to schedule a meeting with the Local Government Commission (LGC) to see where the County stands as far as consideration for holding a future bond referendum. The referendum could include funds for a Forsyth Technical Community College stand-alone campus in Stokes County.

Finance Director Julia Edwards noted that the projected lottery revenues are not expected to be as high as the earlier projections.

The Board discussed the Meadows Property, which had been approved by a previous Board as the location for a FTCC stand alone campus. Chairman Inman noted that FTCC has discussed the possibility of conducting a feasibility study related to a stand-alone campus in Stokes County.

Proposed VA CBOC Clinic

Vice Chairman Walker noted that Crow McGee had not received information allocating funding for a CBOC in Stokes County yet. Mr. McGee is still working on the project.

Commissioner Smith questioned if it would be possible to place the Veterans Officer in King at the America Legion or Southwestern Service Center one day a week. Commissioner Lankford noted the District Office does not recommend a satellite office at the current time due to having to transfer clients' records between Danbury and King – confidentiality of records.

Southwestern Service Center

Interim Health Director/Manager Bryan Steen briefed the Board on the possibility of hiring another mid level provider in order to provide additional services in Danbury and King. Interim Director/Manager Steen also noted that the Maternal Outreach workers would be moving to Southwestern Service Center which will save time and gasoline, and allow workers to be able to see clients more efficiently in that area.

Interim Director/Manager Steen stated he is currently working with health department personnel to look at other possible options to be able to provide more services to the citizens of Stokes County. Interim Director/Manager Steen stated he did not know how long he would be serving as Interim Health Director.

Old Correction Property located in the Meadows

County Manager Bryan Steen updated the Board regarding the clean up work being done at the old Prison Property in Meadows.

Animal Control

County Manager Bryan Steen updated the Board regarding the work being done at the Animal Shelter, which was mandated by the State at the last inspection. Manager Steen noted that most of the work has been completed.

Space Issues

The Board discussed the need for a complete facility inventory/space needs assessment in order start working on space issues (District Attorney, Board of Elections, etc.) in the County.

Chairman Inman expressed appreciation to the Board for a very productive meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Inman entertained a motion to adjourn the Goals Planning Session.

Commissioner Smith moved to adjourn the Goals Planning Session. Vice Chairman Walker seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Darlene M. Bullins
Clerk to the Board

J. Leon Inman
Chairman