

*Scotland County Board of Commissioners 2007 Planning Retreat
February 7, 2007, Commissioners Chamber, 1405 West Boulevard, Laurinburg*

MINUTES

**Scotland County Board of Commissioners
Planning Retreat (reconvened), February 7, 2007
Scotland County Complex, 1405 West Boulevard, Laurinburg NC**

At 12 p.m. Chairman J. D. Willis reconvened the meeting for the 2007 Planning Retreat. Commissioners in attendance: Chairman Willis, Vice Chair Betty Blue Gholston and Commissioners John Alford, Leon Butler, Guy McCook, Joyce McDow (*arrived at 12:10 p.m.*) and Clarence McPhatter (*arrived at 12:15 p.m.*). Staff in attendance: County Manager John A. Crumpton, Finance Officer/Assistant County Manager Kevin Patterson, County Attorney Edward Johnston and Clerk to the Board Ann W. Kurtzman. Chairman Willis delivered the opening prayer.

FY 07-08 Budget

Finance Officer/Assistant County Manager Kevin Patterson discussed the budget calendar and noted that May 16 would be the target date for delivery of the proposed budget to the Commissioners.

Mr. Patterson outlined budget projections through fiscal year 2011, which would be the next revaluation year.

(Commissioners McDow and McPhatter arrived during Mr. Patterson's presentation).

Mr. Patterson provided estimates on expenditures and revenues based on two scenarios — a two-cent decrease in the tax rate and a five-cent decrease in the tax rate.

The Commissioners discussed in general how much the tax rate could be lowered based on the assumptions and when it would have to be raised.

County Manager John Crumpton said the school current expense for FY 2007-2008 is estimated at \$461,000, which is a 4.86 percent increase over this year. Mr. Crumpton said he expects this figure to increase faster over the years than most of the County's other expenses because the need for school capital will increase as facilities age.

Solid Waste Items

Dr. G.N. Richardson provided information on a preliminary site study of the Jordan property and whether it is suitable for a commercial landfill.

Dr. Richardson outlined the commercial life expectancy of a landfill on the site using three possible scenarios.

1. There is potential for a landfill with a 10-year life expectancy.
2. A landfill with a 15-year life expectancy is another option.
3. A landfill with a 29-year to 36-year life expectancy with acceptance of 5,000 tons a day also exists on the site. Dr. Richardson said this scenario would require the purchase of property currently not under option and the taking of a portion of a State road (Sneads Grove Road).

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Dr. Richardson said the Jordan property is the best site for a facility of this size in the State, and it has tremendous potential. He said the third option could generate \$100 million for the County during the life of the landfill.

He said the negatives would be increased truck traffic and noise from backup compactors.

Dr. Richardson discussed the possibility of groundwater contamination. He explained that because there is a low permeability layer beneath the site, any contamination would not go deep and would not go undetected. Dr. Richardson discussed how it would be repaired after detection. Dr. Richardson also discussed landfill capping methods.

Vice Chair Gholston said the possibility of closing a portion of Sneads Grove Road would be a concern for her.

Next, Poyner & Spruill Attorney Keith Johnson provided an overview of the amended statute authorizing counties to issue franchises for operation of solid waste landfills. He outlined the key changes to the statute.

Mr. Richardson said the big change is that a facility plan now must be incorporated into the franchise. Mr. Richardson said the option to issue a preliminary franchise would include a general description of the landfill and not a facility plan.

Mr. Richardson provided an update on the moratorium. He said the subcommittee did not submit its report February 1 as was expected.

Mr. Richardson said there is a possibility a bill would be introduced to create a statewide tipping fee or a bill would be introduced to create a shared franchise authority on landfills that are not considered local.

Chairman Willis commented that such legislation would be a way for the State to get additional revenues from counties.

Mr. Richardson said if the Board agrees to move forward it would be best to issue a preliminary franchise sooner rather than later since anything imposed by the State would not impact the County.

The Commissioners took a break. The meeting resumed at 2:10 p.m.

The solid waste discussion continued with a report from County Engineer Jim Blackwell.

Mr. Blackwell recommended that in-County tipping fees be raised \$2 a ton to \$35 for C&D and \$39 for MSW and the out-of-county rate raised \$3 higher than the in-County rate for the FY 2007-2008 budget. Mr. Blackwell said the increase would help with revenue accumulation required for closure and post-closure liability.

Mr. Blackwell said Public Works would request a truck replacement in FY 2007-2008 and another in FY 2008-2009.

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Capital Projects Discussion

The following capital projects were discussed:

- County Manager Crumpton said the Courthouse roof project should be completed by September 30.
- Bills have been introduced in the State House and Senate to appropriate \$2 million for the Richmond Community College Scotland Campus Project.
- County Manager Crumpton said new school construction might be discussed in the next year or two.
- Now that the move to Covington Street is complete, there will be a need for work on the parking lot and the roof. The purchase of a generator would eventually be necessary as a backup to the phone system and computer servers.
- Funding for the expansion of Scotland Place for Cooperative Extension offices would rely on grants.
- Parking for the Sheriff's Department behind the Courthouse still needs to be resolved.
- Lights at the Recreation Complex softball/baseball fields remain an issue. The Tourism Development Authority developed a proposal, which would pay for the lights. Chairman Willis said the Commissioners would entertain a proposal presented by the TDA on funding the lights.
- The lack of space remains an issue for Social Services, and the Commissioners discussed at length possibilities for expanding the agency's space. Commissioner Butler suggested that if the current space was used that an assessment study be conducted to address safety issues. Commissioner McCook asked what it might cost to conduct a space needs study. The Commissioners discussed the possibility of leasing space for Social Services, and the vacant Winn Dixie was suggested.
- County Manager Crumpton said a Fixed Assets Program for the County, an issue addressed in the annual audit, could be resolved for about \$15,000. An additional \$12,000 would be needed to replace the firewall, and GIS upgrades with the City will need to be budgeted at \$10,000. Mr. Crumpton said funds are available in the revaluation fund for tax appraisal software for the 2011 revaluation.
- County Manager Crumpton asked the Board to consider an upgrade to the Commissioners Chamber since the EOC (Emergency Operations Center) must now be moved from the Annex. Mr. Crumpton said \$79,000 in Homeland Security funds is available to cover the EOC move.
- Mr. Crumpton discussed vehicle needs for this year and next fiscal year.
- The County Manager said the State Jail Inspector would like the Jail upgraded or even replaced. Other existing County facilities need upgrading, and the County Complex needs a new HVAC system. Mr. Crumpton said future expansion of County water lines would generate more revenue for capital replacements.

Chairman Willis asked the County Manager to look into the cost of replacing the HVAC unit at the County Complex.

- Mr. Crumpton asked the Commissioners to consider establishing a Capital Project Fund to set aside \$100,000 each year for projects that replace/repair County assets over time.

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Commissioner McCook suggested that some portion of the Fund Balance be designated for capital items.

Chairman Willis said that some major capital expenditures should be identified and addressed now.

County Attorney Ed Johnston asked the Commissioners to consider approval of a resolution, which would authorize conveyance of the former Central School to Opportunity, Inc.

Motion was made by Commissioner McCook and duly seconded by Commissioner Alford to approve the resolution authorizing conveyance of real property the former Central School to Opportunity, Inc. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONVEYANCE OF REAL PROPERTY (FORMER CENTRAL SCHOOL) FOR PURPOSE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION, RENOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT AND TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO LOW OR MODERATE INCOME PERSONS

WHEREAS, Scotland County (hereinafter “the County”) previously entered into an Option to Purchase for the above described purpose with Opportunity, Inc.; and

WHEREAS, Opportunity, Inc. and/or its assignee intend to engage in residential housing construction, new or rehabilitated, for sale or rental to persons and families of low or moderate income; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N. C. G. S. § 153A-378, the County is authorized to convey property by private sale to any public or private entity that provides affordable housing to persons of low or moderate income; and

WHEREAS, the County has received notice of intent to exercise the Option to Purchase;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- 1) The appropriate County officials are authorized to execute and deliver to Opportunity, Inc. or its assignee a special warranty deed, upon compliance with the terms of the Option to Purchase and receipt of payment of the price of \$10.00.
- 2) Conveyance by private sale, as contemplated in the Option to Purchase, is hereby confirmed and ratified as appropriate.
- 3) The County Attorney shall coordinate and assist with the closing of this sale. Approved by Resolution of the Scotland County Board of Commissioners, this the 7th day of February, 2007.

Commissioners’ Items

Tax Administrator Mary Helen Norton said \$64,315,000 in real property is not taxed because of farm/forestry reasons. Ms. Norton said that property does not include game lands. She discussed what is required in order to qualify as farm/forestry exemption.

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The Commissioners then discussed development and creating growth in areas outside Laurinburg.

Commissioner McDow said it is important to look other communities in the County to see what they need and how future development might attract an anticipated population increase through BRAC. Commissioner McDow said the County must become more active in this in order to benefit economically from that expansion.

County Manager Crumpton said BRAC RTF is asking its member counties to contribute \$2,500 for economic consulting from Greenfield Services. The consulting firm would contact defense contractors interested in moving to the region to determine intentions and requirements. Greenfield Services also would coordinate with local EDCs in the development of proposals and selection of sites. It would compile a list of available office space, flex, warehouse and manufacturing space by county in the region.

Motion was made by Commissioner McPhatter and duly seconded by Commissioner McCook to approve \$2,500 to contract with Greenfield Services along with other BRAC RTF member counties. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

The Commissioners took a break. The meeting resumed at 3:40 p.m.

County Manager's Items

At the request of Chairman Willis, County Manager Crumpton discussed the proposed distribution communitywide of a Citizens Report. The last such report was distributed in 1997 and was favorably received, said Chairman Willis.

Mr. Crumpton presented a price quote on a four-page or eight-page newsletter in black and white or color and the cost for mailing a Citizens Report.

Chairman Willis said that from the information provided and based on the content of the newsletter, it should be eight pages in color. He asked that a 2007 Citizens Report be produced for review by the Commissioners.

County Manager John Crumpton discussed pay classification, merit and longevity pay issues. Mr. Crumpton suggested that pay classification requests could be addressed at a budget workshop. Mr. Crumpton suggested that longevity pay should be reviewed since it has not been updated in quite a while and incentives might be developed for merit raises.

Chairman Willis asked the County Manager to consider merit bonuses.

Chairman Willis also asked the County Manager to provide the Commissioners with figures on a three percent, four percent and five percent cost of living increase.

Other Items

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County Manager Crumpton said FirstCarolinaCare, the County's health care provider, reported a loss ratio of 116 percent. Mr. Crumpton said that will translate into a double digit increase next fiscal year for employee health care. Mr. Crumpton said something must be done to encourage employees and their spouses to get healthy.

Commissioner McPhatter left the meeting at 4:05 p.m.

County Manager Crumpton said workers comp, which currently is provided by NCACC, will go out for bid.

Motion was made by Commissioner McDow and duly seconded by Commissioner Alford to go into closed session in accordance with 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with an attorney. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

OPEN SESSION RESUMED

Motion was made by Commissioner Alford and duly seconded by Vice Chair Gholston to adjourn. Vote: Motion unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann W. Kurtzman
Clerk to the Board

J.D. Willis
Chairman