

*Scotland County Board of Commissioners reconvened meeting
November 8, 2007, Laurinburg City Council Chamber, 303 West Church Street, Laurinburg*

MINUTES

**Scotland County Board of Commissioners
Reconvened Meeting, November 8, 2007
Joint Session with Laurinburg City Council
City Council Chamber, 303 West Church Street, Laurinburg, NC**

Commissioners in attendance: Chairman J.D. Willis and Commissioners John Alford, Leon Butler, Guy McCook, Joyce McDow and Clarence McPhatter. Commissioners not in attendance: Vice Chair Betty Blue Gholston. Staff in attendance: Interim County Manager/Finance Officer Kevin Patterson and Clerk to the Board Ann W. Kurtzman.

City Council Members in attendance: Mayor Ann Slaughter and Council Members Amanda Faulk, Herbert Rainer, Rembert Deberry, Curtis Leak and Tommy Parker (*arrived at 5:30 p.m.*). Staff in attendance: City Manager Craig Honeycutt and City Clerk Dee Hammond.

At 5 p.m. Chairman Willis reconvened the meeting and Mayor Ann Slaughter called the City Council meeting back to order.

Mr. Harry Yeatman, 2008 Chairman-elect for the Chamber of Commerce, said the increased funding and focus on industrial recruitment is welcome and supported by the Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Yeatman reviewed the collaborative effort by the City, County and Chamber and how it enhanced economic development.

He discussed Chamber programs that benefit the community and its lengthy history of volunteerism among the 400-plus members in support of the Chamber and community activities, which Mr. Yeatman listed.

Mr. Yeatman distributed the Chamber's proposed 2008 budget and the Chamber's projected cash position as of January 1, 2008.

Chairman Willis said it is his understanding that the Chamber is asking for additional funds through June 30, 2008 plus funding support for the remainder of this year.

Mr. Yeatman said the Chamber would like to maintain a staff of three to continue its community programs at the same level as it now does. Mr. Yeatman explained that without additional funding, it would leave the Chamber with a two-member staff. It would be difficult to maintain the programs at the same level.

Mr. Yeatman said he would expect the Chamber to request less funding from the City and the County in the future. However, the funding level requested by the Chamber to get it through 2008 was critical to its transition.

Mr. Yeatman said the \$54,000 appropriated by the City and County would get the Chamber through its budget year. He added that without the requested \$80,000 to take the Chamber through 2008, the alternate plan would look a good bit different than what is in place today.

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Chairman Willis asked if the Chamber could use its available cash on hand to get it through the rest of the year.

Mr. Yeatman said the money is already being spent for ongoing operations through the remainder of the year, and this is the time when very little revenue is coming in. He said the dues structure does not support a three-person staff with the current, ongoing activities.

Mr. Greg Wood, 2006 Chamber of Commerce Chairman, said projected available cash for the Chamber by January 1, 2008 is \$13,000. Mr. Wood added that \$80,000 would allow the Chamber to break even in 2008 with a three-person staff continuing the current activities.

Chairman Willis asked if the Chamber approached the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) and the Laurinburg Downtown Revitalization Corporation (LDRC) for assistance.

Mr. Yeatman said the Chamber does intend to make a presentation to both the TDA and LDRC, but there are no guarantees, and he could not speak for independent boards and the direction they might be planning.

Commissioner Alford said he supports funding for the Chamber, but he does not know at what level the agency should be funded.

Commissioner Butler said that right now the balance for funding the Chamber through the City and County is about \$54,000.

Motion was made by Commissioner Butler and duly seconded by Commissioner McCook to fund the Chamber through June 30, 2008, just like the County funds it already, and as of July 1, 2008, the Chamber would have to secure revenue through some other means. Vote For: Commissioners Butler, Alford and McCook. Vote Against: Chairman Willis and Commissioners McDow and McPhatter. Motion neither passed nor failed.

Commissioner McDow said the Chamber is very important, but the City and County will be taking on a new venture and, as a result, the future will not be business as usual. Commissioner McDow said the County must be good stewards of the citizen's money.

Chairman Willis said the County and City must decide how to help the Chamber for the rest of the year. Chairman Willis said he would like to see an alternate plan for the next year if funds are not forthcoming.

Motion was made by Commissioner Alford and duly seconded by Commissioner Butler to adjourn. Vote: Motion unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 6 p.m.

The Laurinburg City Council did not immediately adjourn. City Council Members continued to discuss how the Chamber could receive City funds for economic development, which it would no longer do.

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Council Member Faulk said that economic development in her opinion means much more than industrial recruitment, and it also is a term that could be used for communitywide beautification projects and programs that enhance and improve the quality of life of a community.

Mayor Slaughter asked the Chamber to present a proposal on the Chamber's changes and the direction it would take.

Council Member Rainer said he did not want to abandon the Chamber. He felt the City Council should keep its \$17,000 commitment to the Chamber.

Council Member Parker asked the Chamber to bring the Council information on membership dues the City would pay as a 171-member organization.

City Manager Craig Honeycutt said he expects the Memorandum of Understanding between the City and the County regarding the Economic Developer and the City's \$35,000 commitment to be ready this month.

The City Council recessed at 6:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann W. Kurtzman
Clerk to the Board

J.D. Willis
Chairman