

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOARD OF
ROWAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR MEETING
FEBRUARY 2, 1981

The Board of Rowan County Commissioners met in Regular Session in the Community Building, Salisbury, North Carolina at 9:00 A.M. The following members were present: Chairman Eugene McCombs, Rufus Honeycutt, Jim Sides, Hall Steele, and Jim Cohen.

Chairman McCombs called the meeting to order and Rufus Honeycutt opened with prayer.

Mr. Sides moved to defer approval of the minutes of January 5 and 12 until the next meeting in order that he may check for corrections. Mr. Honeycutt seconded with unanimous approval.

Mr. Steele briefed the Commissioners on the progress of the Woodland Management Program to provide firewood for the needy. He informed them that prison labor is now available to cut the wood. He made a motion that the Chairman be authorized to sign a contract for the prison labor at a cost of \$1.00 per prison per day. Mr. Honeycutt seconded with unanimous approval. Mr. Steel also stated that it was his understanding that the Jaycees had voted to help deliver the wood to the needy. He gave each Commissioner a copy of Carl Sloop's progress report on the project. (Attached.)

Chairman McCombs welcomed a class from Gospel Light School attending the meeting today. Mr. Nathaniel Holloman's 5th grade class. The smallest class in the school with nine class members.

Commissioner Steele informed the Board that they should be thinking about making more working space for the Department of Social Services or they might find themselves in a lot of trouble. He said that there was ample room in the Post Office. He commented that it would cost money to do this, but to think about it between now and budget time.

Charles Shuler informed the Commissioners about the Salisbury-Rowan Beauty pageant sponsored by the Salisbury/Rowan Jaycees. He had intended to bring the ten contestants but had a misunderstanding about the time the Commissioners held their regular meetings. The pageant originated about five years ago and has been revived. It is a countywide pageant. It will be held on February 21, 1981. There is a \$1,000 scholarship with matching funds from local

colleges if attended. It is based on talent and poise. Mr. Shuler asked for continued support for the pageant.

Mr. Murdoch reported total tax collections through the month of January, 1981, \$4,334,358.04

Mr. Murdoch received a letter from Paul Smith acknowledging receipt of the bill for the naming of roads. He asked to be advised of further actions.

Mr. Murdoch received a letter from Audrey Madden with the United Arts Council requesting the Commissioners to proclaim February as Art month. This is throughout North Carolina. A fund drive will be held through the month.

Mr. Honeycutt made the motion to proclaim February as Art Month with Mr. Cohen seconding. It was a unanimous vote from the Board.

Mr. Steele made the motion to approve Rowan County administering the flood control measures in the extraterritorial jurisdiction of East Spencer with Mr. Honeycutt seconding and the Board voting unanimously.

Mr. Sonny Epting and Dick Hardesty with the Chamber of Commerce requested \$25,000 to promote an industry recruitment program. Mr. Epting asked for the funding to put them on a competitive measure throughout the State. He said the competition now is very stiff from other counties. He said they were completely out of manpower to support activities. Mr. Epting said if the money could be allocated that a new employee could be hired to his staff to relieve him of some of his regular duties so he could be free to travel and recruit industry. When asked by Mr. Honeycutt to go into detail "what he needed the money for", Mr. Epting asked Mr. Hardesty to explain this. Mr. Hardesty said part off-setting salary for Mr. Epting and his secretary, publications, travel and brochures. Mr. Sides asked to defer this request until the next meeting so he could talk with Chamber members. In addition, Mr. Steele commented that he would be reluctant to invest \$25,000 in an industry recruitment when there is not a county water-sewage policy. He suggested that if a new industry were to locate here, Commissioners commit ad valorem taxes paid by the industry for the first five (5) years toward extending water and sewer services to the industry. Mr. Hardesty said when they requested money before, Commissioners said if revenue sharing money became available the chamber could have the \$25,000. Commissioners tabled action until the next meeting.

Stamey Carter and Al Brandon from Sherrill and Smith gave Commissioners an audit report. Mr. Carter said that a couple departments had gone over their budget. In the 1979-80 General Fund budget, the Medical Examiner, Doctor & Lab fees and Dog pound expense over-expenditures totaling \$1,047.32 were amended by

a motion from Mr. Honeycutt, seconded by Mr. Cohen and unanimously approved by the Board. Mr. Carter reported \$1.9 million remaining in the budget from its 1979-80 budget. According to Mr. Murdoch part of the remaining balance will go into the 1981-82 budget. Mr. Carter sent Commissioners a letter of the county's system of internal account control. In this letter, Mr. Carter submitted a few items for information and consideration. He recommended the continuation of a system of accounting for fixed assets owned by the county. During the fiscal year 1978-79 the County Manager began working on a system to account for these assets. Consider placing 2 or 3 Halon fire extinguishers near the IBM equipment. Another matter that needs attention is the matter of back-up storage capability for computer programs and data stored on various storage devices. One method of providing back-up is the use of duplicate discs. Another alternative is the use of a magnetic tape system. He suggested that Dwight Jones and Mr. Murdoch work together to implement a back-up system as soon as feasible.

Mr. Jim Foltz, Parks Director, was appropriated \$800 by a motion from Jim Sides that it come out of contingencies and seconded by Mr. Honeycutt with unanimous approval by the Board. The money is to be used to gravel the new auxiliary parking lot at Dan Nicholas Park. Mr. Jim Cohen made the motion to send a letter of appreciation to contractor Gene Stoner for donating \$280 of his time for grading part of the lot. Mr. Honeycutt seconded the motion with unanimous approval by the Board.

Mr. Danny Johnson showed the Commissioners an updated map of the plans for a Kannapolis-Landis-Concord thoroughfare. This would be for the urbanized area. Prepared for adoption by the North Carolina Department of Transportation. North Carolina General Statutes direct that the North Carolina Board of Transportation and the Rowan County Board of Commissioners reach an agreement for streets, roads, and highways that will serve present and anticipated volumes of traffic in and around the China Grove, Landis and Kannapolis area. The Commissioners unanimously approved some minor changes in the plan by a motion from Mr. Steele and a second by Mr. Honeycutt.

Mr. Honeycutt made a motion to add the following personnel to the payroll with a second from Mr. Steele with the Board voting unanimously:

Barbara Schneider-DSS-\$1,115/month
Deborah Hartzoge-DSS Aide I-\$565/month
James Saleeby-DSS-\$972/month
Larry St. Clair-Sheriff's Dept.-\$751.91/month

Wallace Peeler, Tax Supervisor gave a report on land valuation as of January 1, 1981. Chairman McCombs thanked Mr. Peeler for notifying the 400 elderly people about applying for their refund before April 15. Mr. Peeler asked if the

Commissioners would consider appointing a Board of Equalization and Review for the revaluation or continue to sit on it themselves. Commissioner Sides commented that he felt that Rowan County citizens would rather face County Commissioners they elected than an appointed board made up of five people. Mr. Cohen asked Mr. Peeler if these appointed persons get paid. Mr. Peeler said yes, \$30 or \$40 a meeting. Mr. Peeler said 18 of the state's 100 counties have appointed separate boards of equalization and review. The Commissioners expressed concern that citizens understand the revaluation process which occurs every eight years since they are speculating that land values will double under revaluation. Mr. Sides made the motion for the Board of Commissioners to serve as the Board of Equalization and Review with Mr. Cohen seconding with the Board voting yes, except Mr. Steele who voted no. He said that it was not his job to know about real estate. That the people needed well qualified people to do their reevaluating. Mr. Honeycutt said that it was a good learning process. Mr. McCombs said he was in favor of sitting on this board-he would like for the Commission to do this-to study their revaluation. Mr. Honeycutt said "there would be no one to blame but us."

Mr. Murdoch reported interest, appropriations not spent as of January 31, 1981:

General Fund	\$225,734.67
Revenue Sharing	14,633.09
Debt Service	1,383.54
Rev	<u>12,182.63</u>
Total	\$252,933.93

Mr. Murdoch reported refunds. Tax Supervisor's Office. James McCulloh-plumber, 1978 listed taxes in error. Had sold a tractor backhoe- \$23.60 refund. Mr. Honeycutt made the motion to approve the refund with Mr. Sides seconding. The Board voted unanimously.

A refund for E.H. Kimball. Listed a 1974 Oldsmobile twice. \$8.05 refund. Mr. Honeycutt made the motion to approve the refund with Mr. Steele seconding. The Board voted unanimously.

A refund for Paul Smith. For an incorrect listing. Had a 1975 Mercury valued as a 1979 Mercury at \$7,775 compared to the actual value of \$2,150. The difference in the tax was \$32.34. Mr. Honeycutt made the motion to approve the refund with Mr. Sides seconding. The vote was unanimous by the Board.

The following transfer for Social Services was approved. Transfer \$2,500 from Day Care to Voluntary Travel, 6157. Mr. Honeycutt made the motion to approve the transfer with Mr. Steele seconding.

Mr. Murdoch presented a budget amendment to the Board for their approval. The amendment is for the final state grant figures for the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Program which was approved by the Commissioners in September. (attached). Mr. Sides moved to disapprove the budget resolution. He said the County did not have to accept these State funds. Mr. Cohen seconded. Mr. Steele said to decide what our responsibilities were as far as needing programs. Mr. Cohen said he had information from Raleigh which informed him that the WIC program is the "single most expensive budget item in the Department of Human Resources." Mr. Cohen also said he "disapproved of the people the program aids, people who irresponsibly in many cases have children that are illegitimate whether it is done by lust or not." I have come to the point as a taxpayer where I am tired of carrying this additional burden. Mr. McCombs said, this unborn child needs all the help it can get if the mother cannot provide for it, regardless of how she got pregnant. Mr. McCombs called for a vote on not approving the amendment. The motion failed 3/2. He entertained a motion to accept the budget amendment. Mr. Steele then made a motion to approve the WIC budget amendment with Mr. Honeycutt seconding. Mr. Sides and Mr. Cohen voting against it.

Mr. Steele reported on the lease with Pierce-Tuttle Associates which operated the Heritage Home. Mrs. Morrow who had asked to be on the Agenda this month to talk about the Heritage Home was not there. The lease agreement has been put off twice. Mr. Steel made a recommendation to renew the lease for one year with Mr. Honeycutt seconding. This recommendation was based on the findings in the home after Mr. Steele and Mr. Murdoch had visited the home and complaints investigated. Mr. Sides abstained from voting. He said he had visited the home upon complaints that he had received but did not know what to look for. He had no evidence to go on. The vote was 4 for and 1 abstain.

The County Manager had asked Commissioners if they still wanted to request the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission to do a study of the fox population in Rowan to determine if fox harvesting should be allowed here. This would require action by the General Assembly. Mr. Cohen made a motion to proceed with the bill and send it to legislation with Mr. Sides seconding and the board voting unanimously.

Mr. Murdoch reported on an architect agreement with Robert Stone for completion of the Amphitheater at Dan Nicholas Park. Mr. Honeycutt made the motion to authorize Mr. Murdoch to sign the agreement with Mr. Cohen seconding with the Board voting unanimously.

Mr. Murdoch reported on an architect agreement with William Stone for the second phase of Kerr Mill. The County has appropriated \$4,500 to match a \$4,500 State Grant for this work. Mr. Honeycutt made the motion to authorize the County

Manager to sign the contract with Mr. Steele seconding. The board voted unanimously.

The Commissioners heard complaints about the Sheriff's Department from Mr. Charles Coughenhour from the South Rowan area. He informed the Commissioners that he has had nothing but trouble for the past ten years, and nothing is being done. He has had three cars burned, a motorcycle stolen and threatening phone calls. He called the Sheriff's Department and talked with Mr. Bost. No investigations were made. Reports were made out. He claims that he is being ripped off all the time. H also stated that a person in North Kannapolis lost \$8,165 in rare coins to burglary. Nothing was recovered. He said, "what can I do? I refuse to pay taxes any more if I can't get protection." Mr. Honeycutt recommended that Mr. Steele and Mr. Sides, the Commissioners on the Sheriff's committee, visit the Sheriff and try to work out something for Mr. Coughenhour- to try to get to the bottom of his problems. Mr. Steele and Mr. Sides said they would be willing to do this.

Mr. Murdoch presented an Affirmative Action plan to Commissioners. State personnel requires that his plan be put into effect for the State Merit System which pertains to three departments. The Department of Social Services, Health and Emergency Management. Mr. Sides said this was another level of government bureaucracy and somebody to shuffle more papers. He made a motion that the County adopt it for the three departments but not for the other county offices with Mr. Cohen seconding. He later withdrew this motion for more discussion from the Board. Mr. Sides then asked Mr. Murdoch if this plan would keep us out of legal battles. Mr. Murdoch answered it may not keep you out of legal battles, but it may keep you from losing a legal battle. Mr. Murdoch said this plan should be adopted countywide for administrative purposes. Mr. Cohen called the plan superfluous, needless and excessive. He said it could attract reverse discrimination. Mr. Murdoch said the county's policy even without the plan, is to hire qualified people regardless of race or religion. Mr. Sides then asked Mr. Murdoch if they had any other choice but to adopt this plan, Mr. Murdoch answered no. Mr. Sides then made a motion to adopt it for the three merit system departments but not for the other county offices with Mr. Cohen seconding. The other Commissioners voting no, 3/2 vote. Mr. Steele made the motion to adopt the Affirmative Action Plan for all County Departments with Mr. Honeycutt seconding. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Sides voting no. 3/2 vote. Mr. McCombs told Mr. Sides the reason he entertained his motion was so the county would not have two sets of rules for two sets of people. They should be treated alike.

Mr. Murdoch asked the Commissioners about increasing travel pay. The County now pays .19 per mile. The last increase was given October 1979. He has made inquiries with other counties. The state pays .25, Cabarrus County pays .22, Mecklenburg pays .22 and Gaston pays .21. Mr. Sides made the motion to leave the

travel pay at .19 with Mr. Cohen seconding. Mr. Steele was in favor of leaving the pay at .19 but he said it might present problems. He recommended leaving the pay at .19 now but to take it up again next month to see what the cost of gas is. Mr. Cohen asked to what extent do they use their car. Mr. Murdoch said the Department of Social Services uses their cars extensively. The Health Department nurses travel to schools-they have to use their cars to perform their duties. Mr. Cohen said he felt that the employees came out to the good on their travel pay. An employee that drives 24 miles at .19 per mile at 25 miles per gallon should spend \$4.75. Mr. Honeycutt said you have to take into consideration the cost of operating that vehicle. Mr. Sides said to Mr. Honeycutt, "not everyone drives a Cadillac." Mr. Honeycutt voted for the motion. It was a unanimous vote.

Mr. Sides informed the Board that he had received a letter from Tom Blackburn a recently appointed member on the Rowan/Cabarrus Park Project Committee. The letter stated that he could not serve on the committee unless it was under duress. Mr. Sides then attempted to submit a resume on Doug McDonald to fill that vacancy but was stopped by Chairman McCombs. Mr. McCombs said that he did not think this was proper procedure. He felt like Mr. Blackburn should write a letter to the Board resigning. Mr. Honeycutt made the motion to accept Mr. Sides letter as information and take it up at the next meeting with Mr. Steele seconding. The board voting yes except Mr. Sides with a No. The was 4/1.

Mr. McCombs recommended sending letters of thanks to the people who made contributions to the parks and recreation department:

B.B. Miller-\$25-Richard Nicholas Memorial Fund
Sherry Beck-\$50-to the Nature Center
Gilmer Waggoner-\$100-Richard Nicholas Memorial Fund

Chairman McCombs entertained a motion for the Board to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel. Mr. Steele made the motion with Mr. Honeycutt seconding with the Board in unanimous approval.

Upon a motion by Mr. Honeycutt and a second by Mr. Sides the Board went back into regular session.

Upon a motion dutifully made seconded, Mr. Steele and Mr. Cohen were appointed to meet with Mr. Gunn and Mr. Lee to discuss problems related to their positions.

Since there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda L. Honeycutt, Clerk
Board of Rowan County Commissioners