

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
PLANNING RETREAT – JANUARY 28-30, 1999  
PINEHURST RESORT, PINEHURST, N.C.

PRESENT: J. Newton Cohen, Chairman  
Frank Tadlock, Vice-Chairman  
Steve Blount, Member  
Arnold Chamberlain, Member  
Dave Rowland, Member

Staff present for the retreat were: Tim Russell, County Manager; Kelly Dickinson, Clerk to the Board; Ken Deal, Director of Administration; Leslie Earnhardt, Finance Director; Don Conner, Environmental Services Director.

Chairman Cohen called the meeting to order and introduced Mr. Larry Parks who facilitated the meeting.

Mr. Parks began by giving the Board ground-rules for the retreat. He then asked each Commissioner what their goals were. Chairman Cohen stated he hoped the Board would be able to effectively discuss all of the issues. Commissioner Tadlock stated he felt the agenda included all of the issues the Board needed to consider but felt a priority should be given to education. Commissioner Rowland stated he wanted to keep the tax rate at the same level, not to raise taxes. Commissioner Blount said he felt the Board needed to look ahead and to work with population growth issues. Commissioner Chamberlain said he felt the Economic Development was important pertaining to controlled growth in order to increase the tax base. He said he felt the Board needed to partner with the DSS Board to consolidate services for better efficiency. He added that they needed to address education and the funding and accountability aspect. Courthouse space was also one of Commissioner Chamberlain's concerns along with planning for population growth.

UPDATE ON CURRENT PROJECTS:

The Board reviewed updates on current projects including a schedule for the 1999 revaluation, the status of the 800 radio program for the volunteer fire departments, a review of the County's self-insurance programs, the Brendle's building renovation, and the plan to expand the National Cemetery.

The Board discussed at length courthouse needs and space. The Board agreed by consensus that the two unfinished courtrooms needed to be finished to

accommodate a newly appointed district court judge. The Board discussed meeting with judicial officials to discuss completion of the necessary projects.

### PUBLIC LIBRARY

Commissioner Tadlock brought the Board up to date on efforts by the Library Board to develop a South Rowan Regional Library. He discussed potential sites including one adjacent to the South Rowan YMCA. The Board decided to seek available land, hopefully through donations, for the South Rowan Library.

### SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Sheriff George Wilhelm and Major Tim Bost joined the Board to discuss their needs for the Sheriff's Office and Detention Center.

Sheriff Wilhelm stated that the detention center was over capacity and they needed POD B to be completed for utilization. He noted that they would start the house arrest program by the first of March, but that he did not think it would have much of an impact on the overcrowding.

Sheriff Wilhelm discussed a master deputy program and the need to implement the program to obtain deputies with additional experience and training. He also discussed the need for a South Rowan satellite office, perhaps closer to China Grove to serve that area.

The Board asked Sheriff Wilhelm about the need for additional bailiffs at the Courthouse and the process for hiring qualified bailiffs.

### SCHOOLS

Dr. Bettie Starr, Chairman of the School Board, Dr. Joe McCann, Superintendent and Gene Miller talked with the Board about needs for the schools.

They discussed the goal to provide funding to bring the schools to state average funding and the proposed grade standards that tie into the funding plan.

The Board discussed teacher supplements and the cost to bring those to state average as well. They challenged the School Board to work to meet that goal.

The Board also discussed seeking support for the one cent sales tax option. They urged the School Board to lobby their state association for support of the legislation.

An efficiency study of the Schools that had been proposed during the past year, was discussed. The Board agreed to allow the Chairman and Vice-Chairman from each Board to work on an acceptable format for the study so they could move forward with the project. They also agreed that they should have citizen participation.

## PARKS

The Board discussed several items submitted by the Parks for consideration. These included a new habitat for the bears at Dan Nicholas and the Black Road Nature Preserve.

Commissioner Blount discussed the Nature Preserve with the Board and stated that he felt the project could be very successful with very little money from the County. He discussed the possibilities of obtaining additional property to increase the park.

The Board also discussed the bear habitat at Dan Nicholas Park. They agreed the bears definitely needed a new habitat or the County should give the bears to someone who can provide adequate space for them.

The Administration Building at Dan Nicholas Park was discussed, however, the Board felt that due to the expense it more than like could not be a priority in this budget.

1-29-99

## EDC

Jake Alexander, Economic Development Commission Chairman discussed economic development efforts with the Board.

The Board asked about representation on the economic development commission and the possibility of changing the make-up of the commission to better represent the funding sources. The discussed changing the appointments through attrition on a gradual basis. Mr. Alexander stated he felt that was a fair request and encouraged the Board to discuss the change with the other municipalities.