

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
December 4, 2000 – 9:00 AM
COMMISSIONER’S MEETING ROOM, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

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

The County Manager, the Clerk to the Board, the County Attorney and the Finance Director were also present.

Preceding the meeting, there was a standing ovation for outgoing Chairman Cohen.

Chairman Cohen called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. Chairman Cohen provided the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Cohen called for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 20, 2000 Commission Meeting.

Commissioner Chamberlain made a motion to approve the November 20, 2000 Commission minutes. Commissioner Blount seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

There being no further old business, Chairman Cohen adjourned the meeting.

OATH OF OFFICE TO NEW BOARD MEMBERS:

Mr. Russell introduced the Honorable Judge Larry Ford, Senior Resident Superior Court Judge for Rowan County, who administered the Oath of Office to new Board Members Leda Belk and Gus Andrews.

After the Oath of Office, Mr. Russell presented Mr. Belk and Ms. Andrews with the official County Commissioner lapel pin.

OATH OF OFFICE FOR THE ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENTS:

Judge Ford administered the Oath of Office for the Zoning Board of Adjustments to Ms. Belk and Mr. Andrews.

SELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN:

Mr. Russell called the meeting to order for the selection of a Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Commissioner Andrews spoke briefly that he had hoped the Board would have reached a consensus on the selection of a Chairman, but that had not happened. Commissioner Andrews stated that he would cast the deciding vote and he hoped that the board would work in harmony and not let personal feelings get in the way of what is good for the county.

Mr. Russell presided over the selection of Chairman and Vice-Chairman for the Board. He first opened the floor for nomination for Chairman.

Commissioner Tadlock nominated Commissioner Chamberlain and Commissioner Belk nominated Commissioner Blount. There being no further nominations, Commissioner Blount moved to closed the nominations and Commissioner Chamberlain seconded. Board members unanimously approved to close the nominations. Commissioners Chamberlain and Tadlock voted for Commissioner Chamberlain. Commissioners Blount, Belk and Andrews voted for Commissioner Blount. On a vote of 3/2, Mr. Russell announced that Commissioner Steve Blount would serve as the Chairmanship.

Mr. Russell then opened the floor to receive nominations for Vice-Chairman.

Commissioner Chamberlain took an opportunity to state that this would be his third round of selecting a Chairman and Vice-Chairman and added, for the record, that he had not seen the “hard-feelings and animosity” that

Commissioner Andrews had expressed. Commissioner Chamberlain congratulated Chairman Blount.

Commissioner Chamberlain then nominated Commissioner Tadlock for Vice-Chairman. Commissioner Belk nominated Commissioner Andrews. There being no further nominations, Chairman Blount moved to close the nominations. Commissioner Chamberlain seconded and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioners Tadlock and Chamberlain voted for Commissioner Tadlock. Commissioners, Blount, Belk and Andrews voted for Commissioner Andrews. On a vote of 3/2, Mr. Russell announced that Commissioner Andrews would serve as Vice-Chairman.

RECOGNITION OF DAVE ROWLAND:

Mr. Russell turned the meeting over to Chairman Blount, who proceeded to recognize former Commissioner Rowland with a plaque thanking him for his service and by presenting Mrs. Rowland with a picture of her husband as a Commissioner. At that point, Commissioners made departing remarks of praise to Mr. Rowland, citing his efforts on saving the County money and his contributions to the Health Board. Commissioners also expressed appreciation for the astute business expertise that Mr. Rowland brought to the Board. Chairman Blount also made a presentation of a book on the Architecture of Rowan County and a golf clock, depicting the history of golf, as a token of the Board's appreciation.

RECOGNITION OF J. NEWTON COHEN:

Chairman Blount recognized former Commissioner Cohen with a plaque thanking him for his service and presented Mrs. Cohen with a picture of her husband as a Commissioner. At that time, Commissioners praised the former Commissioner and Chairman for his 16 years of commitment and service to Rowan County. Commissioners spoke of Cohen's gentle and intelligent manner, his dedication to the schools and his persistence in not increasing taxes. Commissioners stated that Rowan County would miss the knowledge of County Government that Mr. Cohen brought with him to the Board. Mr. Cohen was also presented with the Chairman's Gravel, a book on the architecture of Rowan County and a gift of an original watercolor, of the County Administration Building, by Betty Sedberry, a local artist. Ms. Sedberry was also present for the presentation.

As a special presentation, the Board named the Commissioner's Meeting Room, the *J. Newton Cohen, Sr. Room* and presented Cohen with a plaque and a picture depicting the appearance of the entryway to the room.

As an addition to the agenda, Commissioner Tadlock made a motion to adopt a resolution naming Mr. Cohen an “Honorary County Commissioner For Life”. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Blount adjourned the meeting at 9:50 am and welcomed everyone in attendance to a reception held in the lobby of the Administration Building.

Chairman Blount reconvened the meeting at 10:40 am.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

- Mr. Russell asked to discuss the upcoming Legislative Goals Conference, which will be held January 11-12, 2001.
- Commissioner Tadlock asked to address changing the date of the first meeting in January.

CONSIDERATION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA:

Commissioner Tadlock made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the stipulation that item # D, the Rowan County Sheriff’s Department’s surplus uniforms, would be sold to another county or another law enforcement agency and that they were not to be given away. Commissioner Chamberlain seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

- A. Approval to set a public hearing for a rezoning from RA to CBI on a request from Jim Epting.
- B. Approval to set a public hearing for CUP-11-00, a request to subdivide in the CBI district
- C. Approval for a NCDOT request to add Dove Meadow Drive to the Secondary Road System for maintenance.
- D. Approval to declare the Sheriff’s Department uniforms surplus.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Chairman Blount opened the Public Comment Period to entertain comments from those who wished to address the Board.

There being no one in attendance who wished to address the Board, Chairman Blount closed the Public Comment Period.

PRESENTATION ON ROWAN COUNTY'S UNITED WAY DRIVE:

Clyde Fahnestock, Director of Senior Services, presented to the Board the results of Rowan County's successful United Way Campaign. The goal was set to raise 10 percent more in funding that last year. Rowan County employees raised \$41,197, which is 11 percent greater than the total from last year's campaign.

Commissioner Tadlock requested that the Clerk send a note of thanks to the Rowan County employees on a job well done under the direction of Mr. Fahnestock.

DISCUSSION OF COMMISSIONER'S PLANNING RETREAT:

Rita Foil, Clerk to the Board, updated the Board on estimates for possible locations for the upcoming Commissioner's Planning Retreat. Three estimates were received, ranging from the high quote from the Holly Inn at the Pinehurst Resort, to the low quote for the Four Season's Conference Center in Greensboro. Mid-Pines, located in Southern Pines, provided a mid level quote that was inclusive of conference room rental, meals and snacks. Confirmation on the facility would need to be decided so that reservations may be made. The tentative date for the retreat is February 8-10, 2001, which falls in-between the scheduled Board meetings during the month of February.

Chairman Blount asked the Board for comments. Commissioner Belk stressed the importance of educating the public that the Commissioner's Planning Retreat is a "work session". Commissioner Belk stated the advantage of the retreat being outside of Rowan County would allow Commissioners to concentrate on the issues, without distractions.

Commissioner Tadlock agreed with Commissioner Belk and stressed the need to have the agenda planned ahead and to know the issues to be discussed at the retreat. Commissioner Tadlock also mentioned the Agricultural Building as a possible location, should the Board choose to stay in the County.

Chairman Blount reviewed the process for the retreat, consisting of meetings during the day and sometimes in the evenings, with breaks and meals in-between. The retreat also provides an opportunity for the Board to get to know each other and the staff. This can best be accomplished when the retreats are held away from Rowan County.

Commissioners Tadlock and Chamberlain expressed reducing the staff that attends the retreat and in turn saving the County money. Chairman Blount stated that the staff could attend during the day.

Mr. Russell stated that staff does assist the Board in understanding the issues. Mr. Russell encouraged the Board to be thinking about the issues they would like to discuss at the retreat. In the past, Larry Parks has been the facilitator for the retreat.

Commissioner Chamberlain suggested going ahead and reserving a 12-room block and reducing that number if needed.

Commissioner Chamberlain made a motion to reserve Mid-Pines for the Commissioner's Retreat. Chairman Blount seconded.

Commissioner Tadlock asked Mr. Russell if "his door would be open" to discuss any item that the Commissioners would like to discuss at the retreat. Mr. Russell stated that he would.

The Board voted unanimously on the motion made by Commissioner Chamberlain.

By a consensus, the Board agreed to hold the retreat on February 8-10, 2001.

Chairman Blount emphasized that this retreat is for a "vision session" and will not be a "financial session".

ADDITIONS: LEGISLATIVE GOALS CONFERENCE:

Mr. Russell informed the Board of the upcoming NC Legislative Goals Conference to be held January 11-12, 2001, at the Pinehurst Resort. Chairman Blount, who is on the State Board of Directors, will be in attendance. This conference is an opportunity to set goals, such as the sales tax issue. The Board also would need to decide on a voting member who would be attending.

Commissioner Chamberlain nominated Commissioner Andrews, as the Commission Vice-Chair, to be the voting member. Commissioner Andrews was approved by consensus.

It was also mentioned that this would be the opportunity for the one-cent sales tax to be approved. Mr. Russell stated that since there are new members in the Legislator, this might be a time to have a meeting to discuss this issue, prior to the conference.

ADDITION: JANUARY MEETING DATE:

Commissioner Tadlock informed the Board that Monday, January 1, 2001, New Year's Day, falls on a scheduled meeting day. The Board decided to change the meeting day to Tuesday, January 2, 2001.

ADDITION: EXPLANATION OF THE ZBA BOARD:

Chairman Blount explained to the new Commissioners that the Board of Commissioners also serves as the Zoning Board of Adjustments (ZBA). The ZBA is a quasi-judicial board where evidence is taken, and based on that evidence only, a decision is reached. These issues cannot be discussed with anyone. Any questions or concerns should be addressed to John Holshouser, County Attorney. The next meeting will be December 18, 2000.

Chairman Blount asked to have added to the next agenda, a discussion on whether the Board of Commissioners should continue to serve as the ZBA. Also, the ZBA needs a set of By-Laws.

Commissioner Chamberlain also stated the need to possibly select a new ZBA Chairman and definitely selecting a new Vice-Chairman, since Mr. Rowland is no longer a member.

ADDITION: BOARD OF COMMISSIONER' S BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

Chairman Blount passed out a list of board appointments and committee assignments to the Commissioners and requested that they prioritize the boards in which they would choose to serve and return their choices as soon as possible.

Chairman Blount expressed appreciation to staff for the arrangements made for the special presentations and the reception.

There being no further business, Chairman Blount adjourned the meeting at 11:25 am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rita K. Foil
Clerk to the Board

