

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
January 2, 2001 – 9:00 AM
J. NEWTON COHEN SR. ROOM, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

Present: Steve Blount, Chairman
Gus Andrews, Vice-Chairman
Arnold Chamberlain, Member
Frank Tadlock, Member
Leda Belk, Member

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

Chairman Blount called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. Commissioner Tadlock provided the Invocation and Commissioner Andrews led the Pledge of Allegiance.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA:

- Commissioner Chamberlain requested to add the reappointment of the Rowan County Tax Collector
- Chairman Blount requested to add the Commissioner Liaison Report for Commissioners serving on County Boards.
- Chairman Blount requested to add Mr. Phil Moore to the Public Comment Period at the beginning of the meeting.

ADDITION - COMMISSIONER LIAISON BOARD REPORT:

Commissioner Chamberlain reported on the Piedmont Behavioral Healthcare Board and asked for support, “prayers” and to lobby our legislators to oppose the “dismantling” of the area mental health boards. Commissioner Chamberlain encouraged the Board to stay knowledgeable on this issue.

Commissioner Belk reported, on the DSS Board, that they are currently working towards accreditation this spring. There are only ten counties that are accredited. DSS has received a \$6,000 grant for furniture for the Mahaley Avenue office. Commissioner Belk praised the DSS staff for their dedication.

Commissioner Tadlock acknowledged that the Library Board has selected an architect who will be putting together plans for the South Rowan Library.

CONSIDERATION OF THE CONSENT AGENDA:

Commissioner Tadlock made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Commissioner Belk seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

- A. Approval of Surplus items for the Convention and Visitors Bureau.
- B. Approval of a Proclamation establishing January 15, 2001 as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.
- C. Approval of a Unanimous Petition for a road name change to Destiny Lane.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

Chairman Blount opened the Public Comment Period. Those who wished to address the Board were as follows:

Phil Moore spoke to the Board on the Noise Ordinance. Mr. Moore explained about the annoyance of his neighbors that play live music and have parties on most weekends. In the past, Mr. Moore has spoken to the neighbors about this situation. Mr. Moore appealed to the Board to give the Rowan County Sheriff's Department the tools needed to enforce an effective Noise Ordinance.

There being no further comments, Chairman Blount closed the Public Comment Period.

REVIEW OF THE FIRE DEPARTMENT CONTRACTS:

Wayne Ashworth, Director of the EMS Department and Art Delaney, the Rowan County Fire Marshall, addressed the Board. Mr. Ashworth informed the Board that they were presenting contracts with the independent Fire Departments, since it was time for these renewals.

Mr. Delaney stated that the Fire Departments could not respond in the County without a contract. These contracts allow the Fire Departments to be covered under state and

federal death benefits and to be eligible for the state pension fund. Mr. Delaney presented contracts for the rural fire protection districts (which are voted in tax districts) and the service districts for fire protection. Mr. Delaney stated that there would be one contract, which will not include an ending date. If any changes were required, the County or the Fire Departments would have 30 days to do so. There are no tax rates in the contracts; only the laws on how to tax are included in the contracts. To change a tax rate would require a separate document with the County and each individual Fire Department. This will enable the Fire Departments to continue to operate.

If the County Attorney were to see no legal problems with the contracts, Mr. Ashworth requested that the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners sign each individual contract. Mr. Holshouser stated that he would like to look into the State Statutes further, which would delay completion of the contracts for two or three weeks.

Commissioner Belk thanked Mr. Delaney for his hard work in putting the contracts together.

Mr. Delaney stated, in a response to a question from Mr. Holshouser, that all the Fire Departments are at a non-profit status. Rowan-Iredell Fire Department is also at a non-profit status but their contract does not have a reference to a fire tax.

Mr. Delaney stated that there were two request, one from the Town of Landis and one from the Town of China Grove, that have services districts outside of their areas. Mr. Delaney was asking that both of these districts be recognized as Insurance Districts. Once approved by the Board of Commissioners, the State Fire Marshall would then recognize these areas as insurance districts. The State Response Survey Inspector would then rate these areas, which would result in a major cost savings to the people living in these areas.

Commissioner Belk made a motion to approve the East Landis Water District and the South Rowan Insurance District to be recognized as Insurance Districts. Commissioner Chamberlain seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

REAPPOINTMENT OF TAX COLLECTOR:

Commissioner Chamberlain made a motion to reappoint Glenwood Moore for an additional year as the Rowan County Tax Collector. Commissioner Tadlock seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The County Tax Collector is appointed and reappointed by the Board at the first regular meeting in January of each year.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS:

City of Kannapolis of Board of Adjustments:

Commissioner Tadlock made a motion for the recommendation to appoint Martha Harrell. The motion carried.

Rowan County Parks and Recreations Commission:

Commissioner Tadlock made a motion to reappoint Keith Yount. The motion carried.

Industrial Facilities & Pollution Control Finance Authority:

Mr. Holshouser explained that this Authority is a financing arm that has the authority to issue bonds for projects within the County. There is no cost to Rowan County because companies that wish to avail themselves with this type of financing, handle all the cost, such as, the bond counseling and Mr. Holshouser efforts in convening the authority.

Commissioner Chamberlain suggested Brian Miller for this position. Chairman Blount asked the Clerk to contact Mr. Miller to see if this is an area of interest to him.

MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY ACTIVITIES:

Chairman Blount reminded the Board about the Martin Luther King Day breakfast on Monday morning, January 15, 2001 at the Civic Center at 6:30 am. Also, the Commissioners have been invited to attend the ceremony at Mt. Zion Baptist Church at 3:00 pm on Sunday, January 14, 2001. Commissioner Belk stated that she would attend this ceremony. There was no information available for the activities at the VA Hospital.

REVIEW OF THE PROCESS FOR MOBILE HOME TAX LISTINGS:

Jerry Rowland, the Rowan County Tax Assessor and Barbara Ames, Revaluation Supervisor, explained to the Board the process for listing mobile homes, the process for taking mobile homes off a listing, and also for tracking the owners of mobile homes once they have been abandoned.

Ms. Ames explained that singlewide mobile home units are considered personal property and can be sold to anyone throughout the year. Mobile homes do require a bill of sale and a title. Doublewide mobile homes are considered real estate. These units are underpinned and the title has been turned in to DMV. When property is transferred through a deed, the doublewide, which is attached to this property, goes with the transfer. Abandoned singlewide units are the problem. The process falls apart when the unit is sold three or four times and, in addition, the units continue to depreciate in value. They become very difficult to track at this point.

Mr. Rowland continued to explain that the Tax Assessor's Office is concerned with who the owner is by January 1st of each year. Listing forms, from the Tax Assessor's Office, are sent to brand new listers, or new residents to the area, or a resident with assets listed the previous year that were taxable and not considered real estate. At the end of the listing period, those not turned in are classified as "late listers" and they are charged a 10 percent late listing fee. The listing period is normally through the month of January or 30 days.

Mr. Rowland stated that before a singlewide unit is moved from a lot, the owner checks with the Tax Collector's Office to verify that the taxes have been paid. Often, this does not happen. If a mobile home park owner states that there are abandoned mobile homes in the park, this owner is responsible for removal of these abandon units. The Tax Assessor's Office does not become involved with this process of removal. The owner's names are not removed from the ownership file for these mobile homes. If a mobile home is sold, and the owner states this information during the listing period or at anytime during the year, they are asked to produce the registration card. Mr. Rowland emphasized that this information is very difficult to track. Since the property is not real estate, no leans can be placed on the property and there is very little that can be done.

In a response to Commissioner Belk's question of working with utility companies, Mr. Rowland stated that the utility permits provide an excellent system that the Assessor's office uses to track mobile home owners. Mr. Rowland also stated that it is very difficult to track the serial numbers on these units since these numbers are placed inside the mobile unit.

Since an ordnance has been enacted to haul-off abandoned mobile homes, Chairman Blount stated the need to find the mobile home owners. Ms. Ames stated that DMV and/or the Register of Deeds Office would be the legal source to contact for titles of ownership.

Mr. Russell stated that those who own property and a mobile home are less likely to "walk away". Rental property is the problem.

REVIEW OF THE TEXT AMENDMENTS FOR TELECOMMUNICATION TOWERS AND TO SET A PUBLIC HEARING:

Ed Muire, from the Planning Department, handed out to the Board the proposed text amendments for telecommunications towers, reviewing the application process for cell towers through the County. Mr. Muire stated that administrative review and approval is provided for co-location applications and no fee is charged for this service. The location and height are the main areas looked at in these applications. Mr. Muire stated that the City of Salisbury and other jurisdictions charge a fee for these applications, which could run approximately \$2,500 for an application.

Mr. Muire continued to review the changes, highlighting the "Existing Alternative and Alternative Tower Structures" and "New Facilities". Mr. Muire explained the "balloon

test”, which would give residents in the area an opportunity to see the impact of towers on the area. Chairman Blount added that language be placed in the ordinance to protect the historic sites and scenic byways.

Mr. Muire explained the tower heights and types of towers, emphasizing restrictions in the RA (Rural Agricultural) and CBI (Commercial, Business, Industrial) districts. Also, provisions for safety, including lighting, protection of the flight pattern and the height of towers around the airport were discussed. Once approved locally, applications must go through an extensive FAA process and, if approved by FAA, permits are then issued.

Discussion took place about the differences in height requirements in adjoining RA and CBI districts and the problems this may cause.

Mr. Muire explained that the applicant or tower owner must provide notification of towers not in operations for a period of 180 days and, at that point, the applicant or tower owner will have 60 days to remove the tower. Applicants will also be required to provide an inventory of existing towers and antennas within Rowan County.

A consultant will be retained, in situations where there are any questions or concerns.

Commissioner Chamberlain asked staff to have the consultant review these changes prior to the Board approving the text amendment changes.

Mr. Muire reviewed pictures taken of different telecommunication towers throughout the area.

Chairman Blount made a motion to set a public hearing for the next Commission meeting, at 7:00 p.m. Commissioner Andrews seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business, Chairman Blount adjourned the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rita K. Foil
Clerk to the Board