

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
February 19, 2007 – 7:00 PM
J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROOM, ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

Present: Arnold S. Chamberlain, Chairman
Chad Mitchell, Vice-Chairman
Jon Barber, Member
Tina Hall, Member
Jim Sides, Member

County Manager William Cowan, Clerk to the Board Carolyn Athey, County Attorney Jay Dees and Finance Director Leslie Heidrick were present.

Chairman Chamberlain convened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

Commissioner Sides provided the Invocation and also led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commissioner Mitchell moved, Commissioner Barber seconded and the vote to approve the minutes of the February 5, 2007 and February 6, 2007 Commission Meetings passed unanimously.

CONSIDER ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

CONSIDER DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

Commissioner Sides moved to pull item #7 (Consider Approval of Resolution Awarding Contract for the Purchase of (2) Ambulances for EMS). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sides moved to pull the appointment of the members to the Board of Equalization and Review (item #8). Commissioner Sides said the Commissioners would still consider approval of the Resolution in item #8. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and passed unanimously.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Mitchell moved, Commissioner Barber seconded and the vote to approve the agenda passed unanimously.

1. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Sides clarified that the County would not continue the position for Consent Agenda Item #C once any approved grant funds expired.

Commissioner Sides moved, Commissioner Hall seconded and the vote to approve the Consent Agenda passed unanimously.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following items:

- A. Set Public Hearing for March 19, 2007 for Consideration of Taylor Clay Products, Inc. Industrial Revenue Bond
- B. Approval for Health Department to Apply for Healthy Carolinians Partnerships Round II Grant
- C. Approval for Health Department to Apply for Targeted Infant Mortality Reduction Project Grant
- D. Approval for EMS to Apply to State for Funding for Community Emergency Response Team
- E. Set Public Hearing for March 19, 2007 for Unanimous Petition for Hat Creek Road
- F. Approval of Request to Accept Subdivision Guarantee for Phase I of Archer Ridge Subdivision
- G. Approval for Rowan Public Library to Apply for Woodson Foundation Grant

2. PUBLIC HEARING FOR UNANIMOUS PETITION FOR WEBB FARM ROAD

Planning & Development Director Ed Muire reported that with the creation of a new right of way to serve lots off Sherrills Ford Road, a petition was submitted for the name of Webb Farm Road. Mr. Muire said the road is currently unnamed and is located south off the 3900 block of Sherrills Ford Road. Staff recommended approval of the proposed road name.

Chairman Chamberlain opened the public hearing to entertain citizen input regarding the proposed road name of Webb Farm Road.

With no one wishing to address the Board, Chairman Chamberlain closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Mitchell moved, Commissioner Barber seconded and the vote to approve the road name of Webb Farm Road passed unanimously.

3. PUBLIC HEARING FOR Z-01-07, REZONING REQUEST FROM GERALD WILLIAMS

John Hanes of the Rowan County Planning Department presented the Staff Report regarding Z-01-07. Mr. Hanes provided a power point presentation and explained that Gerald Williams owns 2 tracts with approximately 4.60 acres on Corriher Grange Road. Both tracts are zoned Rural Agriculture (RA) with TP 205-007 being a vacant tract and TP 205-008 containing the Williams residence.

Mr. Hanes said the applicant was requesting the rezoning of both tracts from RA to Commercial, Business, Industrial (CBI) to allow for building an automotive and storage garage on TP 205-007.

Mr. Hanes said Staff recommended approval of the request and he also reported that the Planning Board had voted unanimously to send a favorable recommendation to the Commissioners.

Chairman Chamberlain opened the public hearing to entertain citizen input regarding the proposed rezoning.

With no one wishing to address the Board, Chairman Chamberlain closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Sides moved, Commissioner Mitchell seconded and the vote to adopt the Statement of Consistency and Statement of Reasonableness as presented by Staff passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sides moved, Commissioner Mitchell seconded and the vote to approve Z-01-07 passed unanimously.

4. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF SNIA-03-07, REQUEST FROM GERALD WILLIAMS

John Hanes of the Rowan County Planning Department reported that Gerald Williams was requesting a Special Non-Residential Intensity Allocation (SNIA) for the purpose of building an automobile and storage garage on TP 205-007, located in the Back Creek/Sloans Creek Watershed. SNIA-03-07 is in conjunction with rezoning case Z-01-07 and will allow up to 70% of the parcel to be built upon.

Commissioner Sides moved, Commissioner Hall seconded and the vote to approve SNIA-03-07 passed unanimously.

5. CONSIDERATION OF ZTA 02-06 (TABLED FROM JANUARY 4, 2007 COMMISSION MEETING)

Shane Stewart, Senior Planner from the Rowan County Planning Department said the Board had held a public hearing on January 4, 2007 to consider

amendments to the Adult Use Text. A motion was made at that meeting to refer the proposed text back to Staff to look at the potential of adding a permit/application fee for adult establishments and also for minor text adjustments.

Mr. Stewart said if the Board wished to consider the new text proposed on page 2 of the staff report, a new public hearing would have to be scheduled.

Mr. Stewart referred to page 2 of the proposed text and said that Staff, along with the County Attorney, felt that a reasonable fee of \$1500 could be justified for the process of obtaining an adult license and what would constitute the fees. Mr. Stewart said if the conditional use permit was approved and the business was still in operation a year later there would be a \$500 re-inspection fee.

Mr. Stewart said Staff envisioned periodic inspections for site compliance with the Zoning Ordinance and any conditions the Commissioners might place on a conditional use permit. Mr. Stewart said there could also be joint inspections with law enforcement. Mr. Stewart said the values could be adopted through the county fee schedule.

Mr. Stewart said at the previous meeting, the Commissioners had discussed modifications to the proposed text. Mr. Stewart highlighted the modifications as follows:

- Page 3; Inclusion of a separation standard for the measurement method.
- Page 3; Non-conformities – citing of new use not making adult use non-conforming.
- Page 4; Clarification regarding adult products.
- Page 5; Deletion of subsection similar to adult motion picture theater.
- Page 5; Reference made back to adult use definition.
- Page 6; Removal of obscenity law reference in the prohibited sign.
- Page 7; Improved language for Statement of Consistency.

Commissioner Sides said he was satisfied with the language and that he felt it would be in order to hold an additional public hearing regarding the changes to the proposed text.

Commissioner Mitchell asked how many complaints Staff or the Sheriff's Department receive each year concerning adult establishments. Mr. Stewart said Telecommunications had pulled call logs and that there had been 1 call from one of the "known" adult uses and 2 others that may or may not be adult uses. Mr. Stewart reported that Staff time spent on one of the uses was extensive.

Commissioner Hall referred to the fees and what other communities were charging for permitting adult use establishments. Mr. Stewart said he and the County Attorney had checked the fees in other jurisdictions and had also tried to quantify the time and resources the establishments might generate.

Commissioner Hall asked if Staff had looked at any impact studies pertaining to the demands for community services, such as detention centers, the court system, etc. and if the fees were based on these. Mr. Stewart responded that some of the larger jurisdictions had performed the studies. Mr. Stewart said the Statement of Consistency provided the reasoning for the Board's actions. Mr. Stewart said there were some studies performed regarding secondary impacts but those studies were costly and Staff had collected information without requiring funds from the County.

County Attorney Jay Dees said there were studies available and if the Board wished, Staff could contact those jurisdictions to gather the content of their studies to see what numbers were reflected. Mr. Dees said there were different levels of fees, licensing, etc. that were not in the current proposed text and that Staff could try to get a comprehensive report to the Commissioners before the public hearing was held. Chairman Chamberlain asked Mr. Dees to provide the information before the public hearing and he also encouraged the Commissioners to contact Staff or Mr. Dees with any specific queries.

Commissioner Sides moved to set a public hearing for the next scheduled meeting. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hall and passed unanimously.

6. DISCUSSION OF MAINTENANCE FOR SUBDIVISION STREETS

Shane Stewart, Senior Planner from the Rowan County Planning Department explained that street maintenance is identified in the Subdivision Ordinance as the developer's responsibility until DOT acceptance but does not identify the County or property owners as administering enforcement. Mr. Stewart said current text should be discussed to develop a policy for enforcement and consider text changes to support the County's position.

Mr. Stewart said the Ordinance makes reference to the developer or subdivider being responsible for the upkeep from the time that the roads are finished, until a petition for addition has been accepted.

Mr. Stewart said the developer signs off on the Certificate of Road Maintenance that is listed on the plats, stating that the developer will maintain responsibility of the streets. Mr. Stewart said the Certificate of Road Maintenance does not further state who will ensure the responsibility.

Mr. Stewart reviewed the information in the agenda packet and discussed the options for the Board's consideration as follows:

1. Adopt policy stating Rowan County will hold the developer responsible and consider revising ordinance text to reflect the process.
2. Adopt policy stating maintenance is a civil matter between homeowners and the developer to which Rowan County has no enforcement authority. Consider revising text to reflect as such.

3. Consider maintenance agreement text before adopting either policy.

Commissioner Sides felt option #1 was the best course of action for the County.

Mr. Stewart responded that the approaches could be more for future requests. Mr. Stewart said Staff had tried to hold the developer responsible however the process could become expensive when the County legally challenges the developer.

Commissioner Sides asked if the list could be made retroactive and County Attorney Jay Dees responded no. Mr. Dees said the developer certifies on the plat that he will maintain the road and that it could technically be a violation of plat approval. Mr. Dees said property owners have a private remedy in the situation whether through their restrictive covenants or any other agreement with their developer. Mr. Dees said the County could not guarantee the future actions of anyone.

Commissioner Sides said the Board understood that there was nothing the County could do regarding existing subdivisions and the roads but that future subdivisions could be required to put forth a performance bond.

Planning & Development Director Ed Muire said the majority of the issues tend to be pavement failures but that there are a number of things that homeowners do to prevent the DOT from taking over a road. Mr. Muire said in looking at developing a policy, a bond up would not eliminate the problem. Mr. Muire said homeowners put items in the right of way such as fences, mailboxes, and incorrect pipe sizes, etc. Mr. Muire said while the road might be fine, the DOT will not take it over with these obstacles located in the right of way and the developer cannot get his performance bond back from the County until the road is taken over.

Commissioner Barber questioned the resolution to the situation by other counties. Mr. Stewart said the counties that seem to be more stringent follow Option 1 listed in the agenda packet.

Chairman Chamberlain said private property owners have a certain amount of responsibility and cannot always look to someone else to take care of them. Chairman Chamberlain continued by saying he liked the County Manager's recommendation listed in the agenda packet. The County Manager's recommendation stated, "Adopt policy stating maintenance is a civil matter between homeowners and the developer to which Rowan County has no enforcement authority. Consider revising text to reflect as such."

Mr. Dees said Staff was looking for direction from the Board as to whether they should explore possible ordinance changes. Mr. Dees said one option was to request Staff to draft an ordinance and come back to the Board.

Commissioner Mitchell said he was comfortable with leaving the matter as a private issue and a civil matter between homeowner and the developer.

Chairman Chamberlain and Commissioner Sides concurred with Commissioner Mitchell.

County Manager William Cowan said one potential problem is that county governments have no authority to build or maintain roads and the County was not permitted by law to do so. Mr. Cowan said the County could get into a situation where there would be no remedy.

Commissioner Mitchell moved to schedule a public hearing for the purpose of gathering input into Options 1, 2 and 3 and the suggestions for consideration on page 3. Commissioner Hall seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Muire asked for clarification on the motion. Mr. Muire asked if the Board wanted a presentation from Staff to elaborate on the issues or if the public hearing was to give the Board an idea of the direction it wished for Staff to take. Commissioner Mitchell said if Staff had additional information as far as the maintenance agreement or other options, the information could be presented at that time. Mr. Muire said Staff would talk to other counties to quantify what they are doing and how their policies relate to the issue.

In response to a comment from Commissioner Hall, Mr. Muire said Staff could contact the school system and learn through their SIMS Office how many students live on roads not taken over by the DOT.

7. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION AWARDED CONTRACT FOR THE PURCHASE OF (2) AMBULANCES FOR EMS

This item was deleted from the agenda.

8. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW

Chairman Chamberlain explained that with the revaluation occurring in 2007, the Board needed to appoint members to the Board of Equalization and Review (BER). Chairman Chamberlain said the Commissioners would approve the Resolution to establish the BER and continue with the current five (5) members of the BER. Chairman Chamberlain said the Clerk to the Board would advertise for applications for the BER and that the applications would be submitted to the County Manager's Office. Chairman Chamberlain said depending on the number of applications received, the Board could appoint a pool of applicants, "maybe as many as 20 or 30" for the County Assessor's Office to draw from.

Chairman Chamberlain continued by reading a portion of the Resolution Establishing the Board of Equalization and Review.

Commissioner Sides moved, Commissioner Barber seconded and the vote for approval of the Resolution to Appoint the Board of Equalization and Review for 2007 passed unanimously.

9. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BLACKSMITH'S SHOP AT DUNN'S MOUNTAIN

Parks and Recreation Director Don Bringle and Jack Kepley, Chair of the Parks and Recreation Commission were present to discuss the request for approval for the Rowan County Boy Scouts to build a Blacksmith's Shop at Dunn's Mountain Nature and History Preserve. The shop would be built in memory of Chuck Barringer for his dedication to Scouting. Mr. Kepley said the Parks & Recreation Commission was confident that it could raise the funds and that the Boy Scouts would raise the money and build the shop according to Rowan County specifications.

Commissioner Mitchell moved, Commissioner Barber seconded and the vote to approve the request as presented passed unanimously.

Chairman Chamberlain called for a short break at 8:00 pm.

Chairman Chamberlain reconvened the meeting at 8:10 pm.

10. PRESENTATION OF ANNUAL REPORT FROM LOCAL EMERGENCY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Frank Thomason, EMS Director, and John Thomason, Chairman of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) were presented the LEPC's activities and goals for 2006.

John Thomason provided a power point presentation as he discussed the appointment and purpose of the LEPC. Mr. Thomason also highlighted the 2006 activities and accomplishments of the LEPC and also discussed the LEPC's goals for 2007.

In response to a query from Commissioner Hall, Mr. Thomason discussed the Hazmat vehicles and their team locations, which were Station 52 on South Main Street and a station on Statesville Boulevard.

Chairman Chamberlain expressed appreciation for the LEPC and said it was reassuring to have them in the community.

Consideration for Change to LEPC Membership

Frank Thomason asked the Board to consider appointing Tom Murphy, Rowan County Fire Marshal to the LEPC. Mr. Murphy would fill the position vacated by the former Fire Marshal.

Commissioner Sides moved, Commissioner Barber seconded and the vote to appoint Tom Murphy to the LEPC passed unanimously.

11. RECEIVE UPDATE FROM THE HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

Rose LaCasse of the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) provided the Board with a status update for ongoing HLC activities. The update was scheduled as outlined in the landmarks designation moratorium, which was approved by the Commissioners at the December 18, 2006 meeting.

Ms. LaCasse said the HLC had met 2 times since the moratorium had been put in place. Ms. LaCasse said discussions centered on choosing appropriate wording to clearly demonstrate that the HLC would not designate a property without the owners consent. Ms. LaCasse presented the 2 options that had been considered, 1) No property would be considered for landmark designation by the HLC unless the property owner voluntarily submits an application; and 2) the HLC would not act on an application unless it is signed by a property owner. The owner may withdraw the application at any time.

Ms. LaCasse said under the rules of procedure which were in place at the beginning of the Commission, Article VII stated in part that no property would be considered as a landmark unless written consent from the property owner is obtained. Ms. LaCasse said the HLC was also seeking appropriate wording to emphasize that the HLC never intended to act in opposition to a property owner. Ms. LaCasse said the committee had also discussed tax implications.

Ms. Lacasse said the report to the Commissioners in the spring would include a resume from each of the HLC members.

Chairman Chamberlain asked if the HLC had a quorum at the 2 meetings that had taken place since the moratorium was implemented. Ms. Lacasse responded that she wasn't sure about the January meeting but that there had been a quorum at the February meeting.

Commissioner Hall inquired if the HLC had discussed going onto private property without owner consent to consider property for inclusion. Ms. LaCasse said the HLC had not discussed the issue during the last 2 meetings. Ms. LaCasse said it was almost inconceivable that an HLC member would be on private property unless the owner wanted them to look at something or make a judgment regarding historic appropriateness. Commissioner Hall said she would like to have a safeguard in the policy requiring the owner's consent.

Ms. LaCasse said the issues at hand had surfaced not at the doing of the HLC but because the State had requested some changes. Ms. LaCasse said that in order for the State to grant Certified Local Government (CLG) status to the HLC, the ordinance must "look like all of the other ordinances." Ms. LaCasse said CLG is a delegation of power down from federal to state to local areas. Ms. LaCasse

said the designation of CLG brings certain privileges including state funding to local governments for projects. Ms. LaCasse said the HLC was formed around the same time the State was going through a budget crisis and that the training for HLC members never took place. Ms. LaCasse said the HLC must also get an up-to-date survey of the County, which costs money and that grant monies were available through CLG status. Ms. LaCasse said for this reason the HLC had been trying to meet the State requirements.

Commissioner Sides said he did not have a problem with the local HLC as long as it operated on the premise of a property owner wishing their property to be dedicated as a historic landmark. Commissioner Sides stated his concern was with accepting state mandates that allowed entry onto private property and declaring that property as a historic landmark without the property owner's consent. Commissioner Sides said his charge is to protect the private property rights of the citizens.

Mr. Dees said the State Historic Preservation Office has a model ordinance that they have approved as part of the CLG process and that the explanation from the state office for requiring the language was "weak." Mr. Dees said the County could have an ordinance and also have a policy that governs what a local commission does. Mr. Dees said there could be provisions in the policy that guide the local commission that can only be changed by Board action. Mr. Dees expressed hope that public forums could be held during the moratorium process to possibly find a way to protect locally what the HLC can do and yet still qualify for state funding.

Commissioner Hall verified with Mr. Dees that he felt the County could take what the State requires of the local HLC and modify that to protect the local property rights and still enable the HLC to seek funding from the State. Mr. Dees responded yes.

Chairman Chamberlain addressed Ms. LaCasse and said he agreed with Commissioner Hall and Mr. Dees in that he had no intention of restricting the HLC from applying for grants, unless the County could not be assured that property rights would not be restricted. Chairman Chamberlain thanked Ms. LaCasse for an excellent presentation.

12. DISCUSSION REGARDING OFFER TO PURCHASE LOT #5 IN SPEEDWAY BUSINESS PARK

County Manager William Cowan said an offer had been received from Sam Collins of S.E. Collins, Inc. for the purchase of lot #5 in Speedway Business Park. The price currently posted for the lot was \$42,500 and Mr. Collins submitted an offer in the amount of \$42,500.

Mr. Cowan said County Assessor Jerry Rowland had submitted estimated value ranges for the remaining lots in Speedway Business Park, effective January 1, 2007. The estimated value for lot #5 was \$53,000 - \$60,000.

Mr. Cowan referred to the map of the park and discussed the sewer issues relating to lots #7 and #8.

County Attorney Jay Dees explained the options before the Board regarding lot #5. Mr. Dees said the determination from the County Assessor was that the current offer was not fair market value and that the Board had the following two (2) options - 1) treat the offer like an incentive, debate the value of improvements to be made, the number of jobs to be created, and schedule a public hearing; or 2) because of an issue of fair market value, the Board could declare the lot as surplus property, propose to accept the offer of \$42,500 and go through the upset bid process.

Commissioner Sides asked if the Board could reject the offer and make the lot available to Mr. Collins for \$53,000. Mr. Dees responded that the offer could be accepted, rejected, or rejected with a counter proposal. Mr. Dees said the price list was last confirmed in December 2006 when the Board went through the same process. Mr. Dees said the recent activity with Toyota is the reason for the jump in price.

Chairman Chamberlain said Mr. Collins got the price of \$42,500 from the County's Website and that he felt the Board should "do the right thing" and accept the \$42,500.

Commissioner Mitchell said Mr. Collins had made a good faith offer based on information that the land was worth the price the County had established. Commissioner Mitchell said he had no problem offering \$53,000 as a counter offer. Commissioner Mitchell moved to provide a counter offer of \$53,000. Commissioner Hall seconded and the motion passed 4-1 with Chairman Chamberlain dissenting.

Commissioner Mitchell moved to adjust the other tract offering prices to the fair market value prices as established by Mr. Rowland. Commissioner Sides seconded the motion.

Mr. Cowan suggested that the prices be mid-range as follows:

- Lot #7 \$ 87,500
- Lot #8 \$ 91,500
- Lot #9 \$120,000

Commissioner Mitchell said his motion was based on the prices as provided by Mr. Cowan.

Commissioner Barber suggested that the Board approve a clause to be put on the County's website for Speedway Business Park that states the prices are subject to change without notice.

Commissioner Mitchell amended his motion to incorporate Commissioner Barber's comments about changing the prices without notice. Commissioner Barber seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

13. DISCUSSION REGARDING REINSTATING THE COUNTY EMPLOYEE MARKET STUDY

Commissioner Barber and Ken Deal, Director of Administration discussed reinstating the County Employee Market Study.

Commissioner Barber provided the Board with a history regarding a Market Study funded by the Commissioners in 1995, which was paid out over a 4-year period. Commissioner Barber said over the 4-year timeframe, approximately \$757,000 was spent on the program. Commissioner Barber said everyone's wages were brought up to market levels. Commissioner Barber said eventually the County stopped the Market Study and adjustment. Secondly, due to financial constraints, the full amount of the yearly cost of living adjustment was not given, and thirdly, the merit pay plan was stopped. Commissioner Barber said the County was now experiencing the result of these actions through higher turnover rates. Commissioner Barber said Mr. Deal felt that reinstating a Market Study was essential to keep starting salaries competitive and retain qualified employees.

Chairman Chamberlain questioned the cost of performing a Market Study and Mr. Deal estimated \$36,000 up to \$100,000. Mr. Deal said Human Resources had performed a study approximately 10 years ago but he felt an outside firm might have more validity in conducting the survey.

Commissioner Barber said the first step in his proposed action plan was to ask the County Manager to issue a Request for Proposals (RFP) from firms that could provide the services.

Commissioner Hall asked what information is included in a Market Study. Mr. Deal said the study looks at the competition and reviews starting salaries, the number of employees, benefits provided, etc. Commissioner Hall said the information is public and should be able to be retrieved from websites. Mr. Deal agreed but said it became more difficult to gather the information based on the magnitude of the study. Mr. Deal said the information is public knowledge but it had more validity if performed by an outside firm. Commissioner Hall said she felt the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) might have resources available to assist with the study. Commissioner Hall said she would like to pursue other options before hiring an outside firm.

The Board discussed the turnover percentages and Chairman Chamberlain said some of the Board's questions might be answered if Staff were allowed to put out an RFP.

Commissioner Sides commented that the County was faced with critical issues in the school system, Sheriff's Department and in judicial needs. Commissioner Sides felt the County had good employees that were dedicated and loyal and that they were paid well. Commissioner Sides said he was not in favor of some of the proposed actions listed in agenda packet and that he was not in favor of reinstating the merit pay.

Commissioner Barber said his intent was to provide background information but said he had not stated his position on any of the proposed options other than saying he felt the Board should consider them.

Commissioner Mitchell said he would like to see an analysis of those that had left and why. Commissioner Mitchell said the County could not compete with private industry or with Mecklenburg County but that it could compete with other surrounding counties. Commissioner Mitchell said he would like for the analysis to include the jobs "that are costing us \$30,000 per year to retrain" and "of the jobs we're losing, how much is it costing us to retrain." Commissioner Mitchell said he would like to have the information to correlate with any potential raise and how much it was costing to replace the employees. Commissioner Mitchell also said he wanted to know if other counties were experiencing similar turnover rates. Commissioner Mitchell said if the merit plan were to be reinstated, it would have to be drastically changed.

Commissioner Barber moved to ask the County Manager and Mr. Deal to go through an RFP process to see what types of services other organizations can provide and the price. Commissioner Mitchell seconded and the motion passed 3-2 with Commissioners Hall and Sides dissenting.

14. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Commissioner Sides referred to the budget amendment regarding the fire departments and the additional funding they will receive over and above their budget. Commissioner Sides said part of the increase is possibly a result that the County collected more in tax than what was expected. Commissioner Sides said part of the funds also come from collections in prior years. Commissioner Sides said a couple of the fire departments were going to receive more than what was projected and that the Board should keep this in mind with reviewing budget requests for additional increases in fire taxes.

Commissioner Sides moved, Commissioner Barber seconded and the vote to approve the budget amendments as presented passed unanimously.

15. DISCUSSION REGARDING AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT ZONE

County Manager William Cowan discussed a proposed agreement between Rowan County and the City of Salisbury for an Airport Development Zone. Mr. Cowan said the zone would create an economic incentive that would allow the County to be more consistent with surrounding competition in the development of the airport. Mr. Cowan said the grant is based on the payout of ad valorem taxes both real and personal, attributable to the land, improvements and personal property comprising the business of the Qualified Taxpayer in the airport development area. Mr. Cowan said one caveat for the proposed Airport Development Zone is that the County would petition the City immediately to voluntarily annex the remaining parcels. Mr. Cowan said the agreement would have a 15-year term and he then highlighted the Choice of Program that would be available to a Qualified Taxpayer. Mr. Cowan said he merely wanted to introduce the proposed agreement, not for action but for comments and concerns. Mr. Cowan said the question asked most often was, "What is the tax rate" and right now the rate varies because part of the airport property is located within the Salisbury city limits and part is in the County's jurisdiction.

In response to a query from Chairman Chamberlain, Mr. Cowan said he and County Attorney Jay Dees had met with City staff and that no Commissioners had been involved in discussions for the proposed agreement. Chairman Chamberlain said in the future that he would like for Commissioner Sides to be involved in all meetings regarding airport issues. By consensus, the other Commissioners agreed.

16. CONSIDER APPOINTMENT TO THE CENTRALINA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Chairman Chamberlain opened the floor for nominations for appointment to the Centralina Development Commission.

Commissioner Barber said the Commissioners had been reviewing the board/committee appointments that are made by the Commissioners and he asked if the Board needed to make the appointment at this time.

No action was taken on the board appointment.

17. COUNTY MANAGER'S ACTIVITY REPORT TO THE BOARD

County Manager William Cowan mentioned a correction in the report regarding the Medicaid Update. Mr. Cowan said DSS actually projects to overspend its Medicaid budget by \$588,000.

Mr. Cowan also reported that he had discussed an additional entrance for the courthouse with Codes Enforcement Manager Barry Motsinger. Mr. Cowan said an additional handicapped parking space would not be required. The only requirement would be signage pointing to the handicapped entrance.

Lastly, Mr. Cowan said there was someone who was possibly interested in purchasing the old Sheriff's Office.

18. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Chairman Chamberlain opened the Public Comment Period to entertain comments from any citizens who might wish to address the Board. The following citizens came forward:

- Jack Fisher expressed disgust for the Board's decision to raise the price on lot #5 in Speedway Business Park. Mr. Fisher felt the Board should have accepted the offer for the advertised prices. Mr. Fisher said the County should get out of the land business.
- Ralph Lambe said he completely agreed with Jack Fisher.
- Major Tim Bost referred to the Market Study for employees and recommended that the Board review the positions that have the excessive amount of turnover rather than looking at all of the employees. Major Bost said working in the Detention Center is intimidating and stressful and that the same situation probably applied to DSS. Major Bost cited certified officers as examples of hidden costs and again recommended focusing on particular classifications for a study.
- Rod Whedbee said there were several approaches for the Board's consideration when considering a study for employees. Mr. Whedbee suggested, 1) have supervisors provide input concerning pay to the Director of Administration, 2) review target turnover rates and which positions the County is losing, 3) use merit pay for employee retention. Mr. Whedbee referred to the Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC) and said he had a problem with the language currently in the policy. Lastly, Mr. Whedbee said he was disappointed that the County chose not to sell lot #5 in Speedway Business Park at the price it was advertised for.

With no one else wishing to address the Board, Chairman Chamberlain closed the Public Comment Period.

19. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Mitchell moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:55 pm. Commissioner Barber seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn Athey
Clerk to the Board