

**ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
ANNUAL PLANNING RETREAT
FEBRUARY 27 & 28, 2008 – 8:00 AM
ROWAN CABARRUS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
BROWNELL BUILDING, ROOM #251**

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

Absent: Jon Barber, Member

Interim County Manager/Finance Director Leslie Heidrick and Clerk to the Board Carolyn Athey were also present.

1. OPENING SESSION

Call to Order

Chairman Chamberlain called the meeting to order at 8:00 am.

Invocation

Chairman Chamberlain provided the Invocation.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Chamberlain led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman's Opening Remarks

Chairman Chamberlain welcomed those in attendance and informed the audience that the Board would not be receiving public comment during the retreat. Chairman Chamberlain then read two (2) scriptures.

Introduction of Facilitator

Chairman Chamberlain turned the meeting over to Facilitator Larry Parks. Mr. Parks explained his role as Facilitator and requested that the Board observe the ground rules he had distributed prior to the meeting. Mr. Parks reiterated the Chairman's comments that the meeting was not open to public comment.

Before introducing the first presenter, Chairman Chamberlain opened the floor to entertain a motion regarding the addition of a Resolution to the agenda. The Resolution pertained to non-opposition to a temporary moratorium on forced annexation in Rowan County.

Commissioner Sides moved, Commissioner Mitchell seconded and the vote to approve the addition of the Resolution to the agenda passed unanimously (4-0).

Commissioner Sides said he had spoken to several municipal leaders who agreed with the Board's request to have local legislators introduce a local bill for a temporary moratorium on forced annexation in Rowan County. Commissioner Sides said the long-term effects of the forced annexation being proposed by the City of Salisbury would affect the municipalities and the Resolution would provide those municipalities with the opportunity to state they were not opposed to a temporary moratorium. Commissioner Sides said the Resolution would also allow for local interaction between municipalities and Rowan County for agreements regarding annexation.

Commissioner Sides moved to accept the Resolution and that it be forwarded to the municipalities for their consideration. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hall and passed unanimously (4-0).

The Resolution read as follows:

A MUNICIPAL RESOLUTION OF
NON-OPPOSITION TO A TEMPORARY MORATORIUM
ON FORCED ANNEXATION
IN ROWAN COUNTY

WHEREAS, local municipalities have in recent years adopted such aggressive policies of forced annexation that interlocal territorial concerns have arisen that have unnecessarily placed neighboring municipalities against each other, and have given rise to concerns by residents outside of municipalities who have no voice on the matter; and

WHEREAS, The North Carolina Legislature has recently appointed a special Commission to study the annexation laws of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, The study Commission will be presenting its findings and recommendations to the full Legislature sometime later this year; and

WHEREAS, On February 18, 2008, the Rowan County Board of Commissioners did publicly and formally request that the local Legislative delegation introduce a local bill to place a temporary moratorium on forced annexation in Rowan County until the study Commission's findings and

recommendations are presented to and acted upon by the full NC Legislature;
and

WHEREAS, The local Legislative delegation, on that same date, did unanimously support and agree to submit such bill to the full NC Legislature for consideration at the earliest possible session; and

WHEREAS, The temporary moratorium would affect all Rowan County municipalities equally for its duration, and for that time would afford all municipalities the opportunity to negotiate interlocal agreements between neighboring municipalities, and with the County, for those who would be willing to engage in “Regional Cooperation” with their neighbors, and

WHEREAS, The Rowan County Board of Commissioners does herewith request that local municipalities, within Rowan County and outside the boundaries of the City of Salisbury, lend their support to this request of the local NC Legislative delegation; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Municipality of _____, lying and being in the County of Rowan, does not oppose the efforts of the Rowan County Board of Commissioners to have a local legislative bill enacted which would place a temporary moratorium on forced annexation within the County of Rowan until such time as the study Commission completes its recommendations and the legislature takes action on those recommendations and lifts said temporary moratorium.

2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

a. Presentation from EDC

Economic Development Director (EDC) Robert van Geons distributed a handout and provided a power point presentation as he highlighted the current activities of the EDC.

Mr. Van Geons said as the new Director for the EDC he would improve communications regarding the activities of the agency and he emphasized that he wanted to receive input from the Commissioners. Mr. Van Geons said he also planned to improve communications to the municipalities to keep them aware of the EDC’s actions in their respective communities.

Mr. Van Geons discussed the “balanced score card” that would allow the EDC to gauge its priorities and activities.

Commissioner Sides asked if the EDC had a tool to show how the cost of community services is calculated. Mr. Van Geons said there was a formula and that he would provide the information, as well as the different models that are used.

Mr. Van Geons said the EDC was working closely with Rowan Jobs Initiative (RJI) and that he had brought a letter from RJI that listed its accomplishments. Mr. Van Geons also discussed the delineations between the EDC and RJI.

Mr. Van Geons reviewed the top five (5) industrial targets for the EDC:

- Food Processing/Chemical Processing
- Motorsports
- Logistic Based Operations
- Life/Medical/Pharmaceutical Manufacturing
- International Operations

Commissioner Sides asked why the County needed both RJI and the EDC. Commissioner Sides said for a number of years the EDC had \$60,000 allocated in its budget to “sell” the County; however, only \$25,000 to \$30,000 was spent. Mr. Van Geons agreed with Commissioner Sides in regards to past years. Mr. Van Geons said the EDC would focus on marketing product and organizations, and would utilize 95% of its allocation based on the information he was getting ready to discuss for Summit Corporate Center (SCC). Mr. Van Geons said RJI was funded through private dollars for branding and large-scale direct marketing. Mr. Van Geons again stated that the EDC would be marketing product.

Mr. Van Geons assured the Board that the EDC would be more efficient with utilizing the budget.

Commissioner Sides said he was not trying to be critical of past or current administration, but Mr. Van Geons had indicated the EDC would have quantifiable measurable results and Commissioner Sides said he wanted to see what the County was getting for its money.

b. Review & Discussion Regarding Summit Corporate Center

Mr. Van Geons said The Keith Corporation (TKC) had a marketing and brokerage agreement with the County, which had now expired. Mr. Van Geons said he understood TKC was pursuing the purchase of (two) 2 tracts in the park.

Mr. Van Geons discussed several options for the County and said the EDC was willing to work with the County to help SCC reach its full potential. Mr. Van Geons asked for 24 months to begin working on the marketing and development of SCC. Mr. Van Geons said the EDC would report its progress back to the Board. Mr. Van Geons said the EDC would rework the 2008-09 budget to cover all costs and would not request an increase above the 2007-08 budget.

Chairman Chamberlain asked if the EDC could market SCC with the money currently budgeted and Mr. Van Geons said yes.

Mr. Van Geons said he would come back to the board in 45 days with a plan and breakdown of figures for SCC. Mr. Van Geons said with the Board's approval, he would put together a presentation as to what the EDC would like to do with SCC.

By consensus, the Board agreed to receive a proposal from the EDC within 45 days concerning marketing SCC.

3. EMERGENCY SERVICES

Frank Thomason, Emergency Services Director, said over the past several years, there has been a shift in the EMS workforce not only locally but across the state as well. Mr. Thomason said the County has been investigating different ways of recruiting new staff.

Mr. Thomason introduced Beth Connell, EMS Manager, and he then distributed a handout.

Ms. Connell said when considering recruitment and retention as it relates to EMS it is a specialized mix and she reviewed the recommendations from the Recruitment and Retention Committee.

Commissioner Mitchell asked how many additional staff would be needed to cover additional 12-hour shifts. Ms. Connell replied that 15 additional staff members would be needed.

Ms. Connell outlined the need for additional employees and supervisors for field training positions, field supervision positions, logistics position, and a technology position.

Commissioner Sides said he wants to take care of County Employees but the County is limited as to how many people can be hired and the salary that can be paid. Commissioner Sides said he would be interested in considering the 12-hour shifts and would prefer to invest money in employees and new trucks rather than a building.

Ms. Connell said she understood Commissioner Sides' view and she said unlike what a librarian does, EMS jobs could mean life or death. Ms. Connell said EMS employees accept tremendous liability due to the performance of medical acts.

Commissioner Hall said she would like the total cost of adding a 12-hour shift.

Mr. Parks suggested the EMS department gather the information and report back to the Board with the figures.

Chairman Chamberlain asked if the EMS department could present to the Board during budget time as to what the worker's compensation claims are and how the employees are being trained to avoid injuries. Chairman Chamberlain noted that

worker's compensation claims counted for a lot of lost time in the department. Chairman Chamberlain said it was important for the Board to have this information when considering funding.

4. MAPS EMPLOYEE MARKET STUDY

Becky Veazey, President of the MAPS Group (MAPS), said the company had been asked to look at recruitment/retention issues in Rowan County.

Ms. Veazey said up to this point, MAPS has conducted interviews to obtain some preliminary findings.

Ms. Veazey listed the four major Compensation System Components as:

- Class & Range Revisions
- Annual Market Adjustment
- Range Movement (Merit/ Performance Pay)
- Longevity Pay

Ms. Veazey explained the system components and said high turnover was one problem for Rowan County. Ms. Veazey said another problem was that Rowan County currently had no method of moving employees across the pay range scale.

Ms. Veazey said the problem was more of a competitive issue since it was more difficult to fill positions with qualified employees.

Commissioner Hall asked if setting an automatic range for the number of years of service would help with retention. Ms. Veazey said most competitors are doing some kind of movement across a range every year.

Commissioner Mitchell asked how many steps were available beyond the initial hire grade/step. Ken Deal, Director of Administration, replied there are approximately 30 steps on average.

Ms. Veazey provided some specific recommendations explaining that some were internal and had no costs. Ms. Veazey said MAPS had not looked at staffing levels within departments and could not make recommendations at this point about staffing. Ms. Veazey said one recommendation was to perform a general employee attitude survey.

Mr. Deal explained that Human Resources reviews each position every three (3) years. Mr. Deal said years ago the County did a market study to compare salaries. Mr. Deal said the philosophy had always been to do more with less and the number of employees in Rowan has always been lower than that of surrounding counties.

Chairman Chamberlain questioned the main reason for compression problems and Mr. Deal responded that the biggest problem was not having a merit system.

Chairman Chamberlain questioned the number of employees that leave the County and Mr. Deal said approximately 52% of the employees have five (5) years or less of service with Rowan County.

Chairman Chamberlain told Ms. Veazey she had provided the Board with good information for the decisions that must be made. Ms. Veazey replied that she would gladly assist as Rowan County moved forward in the process.

Chairman Chamberlain called for a short recess at 10:45 am.

Chairman Chamberlain reconvened the meeting at 10:53 am.

5. AIRPORT

Carl Ellington of Talbert & Bright provided a presentation regarding the Airport.

Mr. Ellington said there were four (4) items he wanted to cover:

- Land acquisition
- Master Plan update
- Hangars and new construction
- Runway extension

Mr. Ellington discussed land acquisition. Mr. Ellington said the County had purchased the Silver Eagle building with 90% being paid for by the State; the County would also be receiving another \$600,000 for additional land acquisition. Mr. Ellington showed a map that depicted the parcels for potential land acquisition. Mr. Ellington identified the following parcels and their costs:

- Permafex- \$700,000
- Rowan Investment Inc.- \$530,000
- Baja- \$800,000
- Rowan Corporation- \$700,000
- Rowan Investment Property- \$9,000
- Fast Food Merchandisers, Inc- \$4.2 million

Mr. Ellington said it would be ideal to acquire all parcels if possible since the state was willing to help with the costs. Mr. Ellington said taking partial parcels would cost as much as a whole parcel.

Mr. Ellington reviewed the funding requirements of the State. Mr. Ellington said by the end of the year, two documents would be completed, the Master Plan and the Feasibility Study. Mr. Ellington said the Master Plan would include drawings that illustrated the development of the airport for the next 20 years.

Chairman Chamberlain said the next Airport Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) would be on March 12th at 1:30 pm. Chairman Chamberlain reported that Commissioner Mitchell would be taking his place on the Committee.

Mr. Ellington discussed the possibility of building new hangars and showed the proposed locations. Mr. Ellington said Talbert & Bright could return within two weeks to offer a full proposal for staff review if the Board wished.

Mr. Ellington explained why the runway extension would be important for the development of the airport and the positive impact of larger jets being able to use the airport.

Ms. Heidrick presented some figures she had gathered pertaining to airport operations.

Chairman Chamberlain recessed the meeting at 11:40 pm for lunch.

Chairman Chamberlain reconvened the meeting at 12:30 pm.

6. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Sheriff George Wilhelm discussed the Detention Center and presented suggestions to assist with the overcrowding problem. Sheriff Wilhelm provided a brief history of the current facility and the average detention center population.

Sheriff Wilhelm said if the County started construction on a new jail today, it would still be several years before inmates could be housed there.

Sheriff Wilhelm suggested an off-site location that would include Sheriff's Office space. He expressed the need for a central location for staff. Sheriff Wilhelm said Architect Paul Bonsall would provide a presentation of a proposed temporary facility. Sheriff Wilhelm reviewed the pros and cons of a temporary facility. Sheriff Wilhelm said some additional problems would be the need for more space for the Sheriff's Office, addressing an employee shortage, and funds to pay overtime.

Major Tim Bost said he had been predicting jail and bed space needs for 20 years and his projections always fell short. Major Bost reviewed the 10-year inmate population forecast and population charts for the County.

Major Bost discussed the recent jail inspection and said the main problems were the lack of floor space and issues with segregating disciplinary inmates.

Commissioner Hall asked if a temporary facility would be a savings compared to transporting inmates to another county. Sheriff Wilhelm referred to page 4 of the information in the packet and said the cost did not include officers, water/sewer, food and other costs for operating the site.

Major Bost discussed problems other counties had faced with temporary facilities and said it was hard to compare transporting inmates versus temporary facilities.

After reviewing some of the costs, Chairman Chamberlain said he did not like the idea of a temporary facility, nor did he like the alternative.

Commissioner Sides questioned the debt service for the project and Ms. Heidrick estimated \$3.5 million per year for 15 years.

Mr. Bonsall provided a power point presentation, outlining options and the types of jails available for the Board to consider.

Due to time limitations, Larry Parks, Facilitator, suggested the Board review the handouts provided and continue future meetings to discuss the jail overcrowding at future meetings.

7. PARKS

Don Bringle, Parks and Recreation Director, discussed the existing County parks and highlighted their current needs. Mr. Bringle also discussed the opportunities for expanding tourism throughout the parks system.

Mr. Bringle reported on the revenue streams and increased park usage over the years. Mr. Bringle listed some of the programs the park system provides that have been recognized statewide as outstanding programs.

Mr. Bringle said the fairground recently held its biggest event (Coon Hunters Association) since the County took over maintenance of the grounds. Mr. Bringle said staff spent 6 hours cleaning up after the event, half a day setting up for the event and had someone working eight (8) hours per day during the 3-day event emptying trash and cleaning restrooms.

Mr. Bringle showed pictures of the condition of the buildings, etc. at the fairgrounds and recommended demolition of the buildings and starting over since many of the buildings only met the minimum requirements.

Mr. Bringle briefly discussed the park known as the "Bullhole", which sits on the border of Rowan and Davie County. Mr. Bringle said the park is not recognized as a part of the Rowan County parks system.

Mr. Bringle reviewed the identified projects list:

- Continue to provide pathways at all parks for ADA compliance
- Install Play Safe materials in all playgrounds
- Provide new restrooms at Sloan, Ellis and Dan Nicholas Park
- Develop more trails at some of our parks
- Upgrade and replace playground equipment at all parks
- Install metal roofing on shelters at Sloan and Dan Nicholas Park

- Surface the Alice Stanback trail at Sloan Park
- Funding opportunity for Farm Life Preservation at Sloan Park
- Partial paving of roadway at Dunn's Mountain
- Resurface 2 of 4 tennis courts at Dan Nicholas Park
- Continue to add security and fire detection at all parks
- Extend hours of operation for Dunn's Mountain
- Locate Eugene McCombs log cabin if approved by Commission
- Habitat expansion by private funding
- Identified Cycling Trails in the County (signage)

Capital needs:

- Land acquisition for existing and new parks
- Farm life preservation center for Sloan park
- Renovate 36-hole put-putt course
- Expand campground area
- Teaching/learning center for programming at Dan Nicholas Park
- Fairground improvement: electrical, restrooms, and food booths

Staffing needs:

- Senior Games Coordinator, part time to full time
- Programming and Registration to part-time with benefits
- Wildlife adventures, Grass Roots Program

Mr. Bringle said the County should consider charging a clean-up fee for any event over 6 hours at the fairgrounds and also investigating whom the food vendors are paying to use the electricity and water. Mr. Bringle said he, along with James Meacham, Director of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, would work on those items and report back to the Board.

8. GROWTH AND LAND USE PLANNING

Ed Muire, Planning and Development Director, introduced Chris Cohen, Land Use Plan Steering Committee (LUP) Co-Chair.

Mr. Muire provided the history of the land use plan process in Rowan County.

Mr. Muire listed the classifications used in the land use plan as:

- Rural Residential
- Industrial Commercial
- Recreation
- Conserved Lands

Mr. Muire reviewed the background of the County's growth from 1990 to 2000 through the use of maps, housing projections, transportation projects, building permit totals and other data.

Mr. Muire said a public forum was held in the West Rowan area with approximately 70 people attending. Mr. Muire said another public forum was scheduled for the South Rowan area.

Mr. Cohen read a prepared statement, which included the following LUP concerns:

- Sporadic residential development
- Lack of infrastructure to support existing and future growth such as fire and law enforcement, EMS facilities, school and utilities
- Farmland Preservation – by means of any of 3 plans available
- Maintaining rural characteristics of small communities
- Balance development pressures with economic opportunities – mixed use development
- Promote quality of life through safe and affordable communities
- Lack of recreational opportunities, parks ball fields, assembly areas
- Annexation issues – corroboration with municipalities
- Rights of the individual and property owners

Mr. Muire provided a time line for completion of the LUP.

Commissioner Sides asked if at any point in time, the LUP Steering Committee would hold a public hearing to present the information versus an open forum. Mr. Muire said the notices that had been sent out had informed citizens that the forum would be a “drop in” in order to accommodate the flow of citizens wishing to look at maps and gather information; however the Committee could discuss the option of a formal presentation to the public.

9. FARMLAND PRESERVATION

Jim Cowden, Cooperative Extension Director, discussed the voluntary agriculture district program. Mr. Cowden said Rowan County has approximately 9,242 acres included in the program.

Mr. Cowden reviewed other farmland preservation tools and discussed the benefits of the North Carolina Agriculture Department of Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (NC ADFP). Mr. Cowden said five (5) farms, totaling approximately 800 acres, in Rowan County applied for grant money from NC ADFP. Mr. Cowden explained the grant does not use County tax dollars, but does require a 30% match that could be provided by the farmer.

Mr. Cowden said since the LUP process has started, he would like a countywide farmland protection plan. Mr. Cowden said with the plan, the County would only be required to provide a 15% match for grant money.

In response to Chairman Chamberlain, Mr. Cowden said farms must have a conservation plan and meet other qualifications to be included in the voluntary

agriculture district. Mr. Cowden said the farms in the program do receive a property tax reduction.

Chairman Chamberlain said it should be clear that citizens are paying the taxes for the farm districts to benefit from the program.

Mr. Cowden concluded by saying he would like to see more locally grown items bought in Rowan County.

Chairman Chamberlain recessed the meeting at 3:24 pm

Chairman Chamberlain reconvened the meeting at 8:00 am on Thursday, February 28, 2008 and opened the meeting with a prayer.

Commissioner Mitchell moved to add a report from County Attorney Jay Dees. Commissioner Sides seconded and the motion passed unanimously. The report (discussion) pertained to possibly hiring an attorney to assist the County in stopping the proposed annexation by the City of Salisbury.

Mr. Dees said he had been in discussions with the law firm, Adams Hendon Carson Crow and Sanger, located in Asheville. Mr. Dees said the firm had a history of success with annexation issues in Rowan County. Mr. Dees also disclosed that the attorney in question was his friend. Mr. Dees proposed that the Board allow him to enter negotiations with the firm. Mr. Dees said the \$200-\$300 per hour fee would include gathering information, and attending hearings. Mr. Dees said he would serve as co-counsel in order to reduce costs and that he would personally monitor the invoices from the firm in Asheville.

Commissioner Sides asked how much time would be involved before a motion could actually be filed with the court to indicate the County's intent. Mr. Dees said "very generically" there is no standing to challenge anything related to the annexation itself until the City adopts an annexation ordinance, which would be around April 21, 2008; the County would then have the right to appeal.

In response to Commissioner Mitchell, Mr. Dees said it was possible the County would not file "anything" until April 21, 2008, however he did not want anyone to "count on" waiting until then.

Commissioner Sides moved to allow Mr. Dees to engage the firm and pursue the matter. Commissioner Hall seconded and the motion passed unanimously (4-0).

10. ROWAN-SALISBURY SCHOOLS

a. School System's Direction

Dr. Judy Grissom, School Superintendent, provided a handout and presented a power point presentation as she discussed the District Improvement Plan. Dr. Grissom highlighted the second year priorities, goals and initiatives as follows:

- Goal #1 – School Climate
- Goal #2 – Curriculum Instruction and Student Achievement
- Goal #3 – High Expectations for All
- Goal #4 – Quality of Life and Education
- Goal #5 – Safe and Supportive Schools
- Goal #6 – Recruitment and Retention of Staff
- Goal #7 – Development of Partnerships

Commissioner Hall said she appreciated the initiatives and applauded the efforts of the school system. Commissioner Hall questioned the attendance of the subcommittees and involvement of parents. Dr. Grissom replied that subcommittees have a regular meeting schedule; however, depending on the agenda, they do not always have a need to meet. Dr. Grissom said the curriculum committee meets regularly, but other subcommittees tend to meet more during particular times of the year. Dr. Grissom said focus groups have given a lot of suggestions on ways to get parents involved and she would be able to provide more information after a focus group meeting scheduled tomorrow.

Commissioner Hall asked about feedback from people who attend Board of Education (BOE) meetings. Dr. Grissom said that could be an option to explore.

In response to a query from Commissioner Hall, Dr. Grissom said that IB Programs are extremely expensive and the school system could not financially support a program at this time.

b. Update on Early College Initiative

Becky Smith said the Early College Initiative would be located on the campus of Rowan Cabarrus Community College (RCCC) and the purpose of the program is to help students earn tuition free college credit.

Ms. Smith said the program was designed for underrepresented students (first generation college students, those lacking funds due to the expense of college, etc.). Ms. Smith said the school would be of the “small school” concept and for approximately 400 students. Ms. Smith said funding was provided by an \$11 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. Ms. Smith said the Rowan County Early College would begin in the fall of 2008 and the Principal for the school would be Cindy Misenheimer, current West Rowan Middle School Principal.

Commissioner Sides asked about the increase of attendance over a span of four years. Ms. Smith said RCCC would be accommodating with facility needs as the program grows.

11. UPDATE ON FACILITY NEEDS

a. Rowan-Salisbury Schools

Gene Miller, Assistant Superintendent, distributed a new handout to replace the information provided in the agenda packet. Mr. Miller reviewed the Rowan

Salisbury Schools (RSS) priority listing for Capital Improvement Projects as follows:

- Cleveland and Woodleaf Elementary Combination School - \$20,970,000
- Knox Middle School Replacement including land purchase - \$24,300,000
- Central Administrative Office - \$ 10,839,364
- New Southwest Area Middle School - \$24,300,000
- South Area Elementary School - \$ 15,652,298
- Elizabeth D. Koontz Elementary School classrooms - \$ 1,913,374
- High School Instructional Gyms - \$8,299,740
- Middle School Instructional Gyms - \$8,299,740

Total for all projects - \$114,574,516

Commissioner Hall asked how much money was invested in Cleveland and Woodleaf Elementary Schools from the 1993 bond. Mr. Miller said he did not recall the exact dollar amount, but knew the money was put towards HVAC system renovations. Mr. Miller said the 1995 bond provided a new media center and elevator for Woodleaf Elementary. Commissioner Hall questioned the amounts invested into each school over the last 15 years. Commissioner Hall also asked for the price of a major filtration system for Woodleaf Elementary in comparison to the price of a new school. Mr. Miller said he did not know the price but he commented the facility would still be a 1927 building with major issues.

Commissioner Hall asked if Salisbury High School (SHS) was in the same situation and Mr. Miller responded that SHS had received more money and renovations than Woodleaf Elementary.

Chairman Chamberlain said he was convinced that RSSS needed a central office building and that he personally preferred the office be a stand-alone building. Chairman Chamberlain said if a new central office would save millions of dollars he would be willing to discuss the options, but that it did not mean RSS could build the facility now.

Commissioner Sides asked if there had been any effort to look at existing buildings that could be retrofitted to accommodate RSS needs. Mr. Miller said RSS had been looking at options and were continuing to look. Mr. Miller said most sites had challenges that would bring the cost up to that of a new building.

Board of Education member Bryce Beard said everyone was seeking a solution to address the problem. Mr. Beard said he had talked with the City and the County individually but not as a group to discuss options. Mr. Beard said the goal would be for the facility to show that education was important and he added that a downtown central office/convention center would be beneficial.

Chairman Chamberlain said the Board liked the concept, but still needed to get finance staff together to talk about the cost. Chairman Chamberlain said it was time to locate a building and get the process started.

Chairman Chamberlain called for a short break at 9:40 am.

Chairman Chamberlain reconvened the meeting at 9:50 am.

b. Emergency Services

Frank Thomason, Emergency Services Director, distributed a handout illustrating the number of ambulance calls for each district in Rowan County.

Beth Connell, EMS Manager, discussed the call data provided in the handout.

In response to Commissioner Mitchell, Ms. Connell explained the components of the EMS system including the rescue squad, volunteer fire departments, and other franchise agencies that work together to cover calls.

Chairman Chamberlain asked if any municipality financially assists EMS and Interim County Manager/Finance Director Leslie Heidrick responded no.

Ms. Connell provided a handout reflecting the cost of adding a fourth shift to EMS and said the information was a result of questions asked on the first day of the retreat.

Mr. Thomason briefly discussed planning for an administrative facility expansion.

c. Telecommunications

Rob Robinson, Director of Telecommunications, reported on the future needs of the radio system due to changes in the FCC Rules and Regulations, and overall coverage concerns from field units.

Mr. Robinson outlined the current and future issues as:

- Nextel Rebanding
- Migrating to Digital
 - Fixed End Infrastructure
 - Mobiles and Portables
 - Consoles
- Overall Coverage
- Narrow banding of VHF

Chairman Chamberlain asked if the municipalities participate as far as cost sharing. Mr. Robinson said there is cost sharing and he explained that the County covers the County radios but not the municipal radio costs.

Chairman Chamberlain asked if there was cost sharing pertaining to dispatching and Mr. Robinson said no. Mr. Robinson said the County only dispatched the fire departments and not the police for the City of Salisbury. Mr. Robinson said the County does not charge the City for this dispatch service.

Mr. Robinson said current FY 2008 funding would replace 234 of the current analog radios to digital as part of the rebanding project. Nextel is paying for replacement costs for these 234 basic analog units. Mr. Robinson said there would be a cost of \$600 for the digital upgrade, while the full cost is typically \$4,200. Mr. Robinson said the savings to the County was approximately \$842,000.

Mr. Robinson said the County would to replace the remaining analog radio units at a cost of \$4,000 each for a total of \$4,000,000 to complete digital migration. Mr. Robinson said the eight (8) consoles in the 9-1-1 Center need to be replaced/upgraded at a cost of \$60,000 each, or \$480,000.

Mr. Robinson explained the coverage issues in the western and southeastern parts of Rowan County. Mr. Robinson suggested maximizing coverage issues by the addition of three (3) sites:

- Pooletown Site
- Young's Mountain Site
- Cabarrus County Site

Mr. Robinson said the cost is unknown for adding the three sites, without having a full study done, but he estimated the cost at \$8,000,000 for the sites and \$4,000,000 for mobiles and portable replacement.

Mr. Robinson said the FCC had made Narrow Banding a mandatory requirement by the year 2013. Mr. Robinson said in order to comply, the county would have to add additional transmitter sites and have the sites connected together.

Mr. Robinson summarized the main areas of concern to be:

- Overall coverage needs
- Migration of the 800 system to Digital
- Narrow Banding the VHF/UHF Band

Mr. Robinson recommended the Board consider forming a radio communications committee to consist of a County Commissioner, County Manager, EMS Director, Telecommunications Director, Salisbury City Radio Engineer or other City representatives. Mr. Robinson also suggested hiring a consultant to conduct a full radio needs study and prepare a cost associated with these issues so that a long range plan could be developed and implemented.

In response to Commissioner Hall, Mr. Robinson said if he could only select one site, it would be the Young's Mountain area since that site could cover a larger area.

Chairman Chamberlain called for a break at 10:52 am.

Chairman Chamberlain reconvened the meeting at 11:12 am.

d. Information Systems

i. Microsoft Enterprise Agreement

David Boling, Information Systems Director, said Microsoft applications for computers in the County need to be upgraded as well as the software for the servers used. Mr. Boling said the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement (EA) license would allow support issues, training issues, out of date programs, and compatibility issues to be addressed.

Mr. Boling discussed the software agreements and compatibility for the software implemented for public safety and inspections.

Mr. Boling provided a power point presentation as he highlighted the benefits for EA, purchasing options and the three (3) year cost comparison.

Mr. Boling said he would not ask for additional funds if it were not necessary. Mr. Boling emphasized that the County was way behind in updating its software.

Commissioner Sides asked if there was an alternative to the software the County was currently using. Commissioner Sides continued by saying since the County was so far behind, now would be the time to explore other viable software options if the County was going to make this major investment. Mr. Boling responded by discussing the integration with other products and the potential problems that might occur with other software.

i. iSeries (AS400 Upgrade)

Mr. Boling said the County uses the AS400 for the majority of data processing and the system has not been upgraded since September 2003. Mr. Boling said the AS400 currently supports several major and critical County applications including taxes, Human Resources, Finance, Department of Social Services and the Register of Deeds.

Mr. Boling said an upgrade is needed to decrease maintenance and storage issues, as well as decrease the likelihood of down time due to parts failing or lack of parts available for repair. Mr. Boling said the upgrade would cost approximately \$215,000, which is usually financed over three (3) to four (4) years. Mr. Boling said he did not see the County getting rid of the mainframe system in the next four (4) years.

Commissioner Sides said at some point in time, the County would have to look forward to getting away from a mainframe. Commissioner Sides said he understood the employees' point of view of not wanting to change.

Chairman Chamberlain recessed the meeting at 12:52 pm.

Chairman Chamberlain reconvened the meeting at 1:00 pm.

e. Social Services

Sandra Wilkes, Department of Social Services (DSS) Director, thanked the Board for their support of the DSS expansion project and she then introduced Bill Burgin of Ramsay, Burgin, Smith Architects, Inc.

Mr. Burgin distributed a handout and showed renderings of the proposed design for the facility. Mr. Burgin discussed cost estimates and said that additional funds of \$2,324,271 were needed, or a program reduction of 15,627 square feet. Mr. Burgin offered some suggestions for reducing the size of the project.

Commissioner Hall asked for an estimate on renovation costs if the County could locate an existing building. Mr. Burgin said a good estimate would be \$80 per square foot if parking already exists.

Chairman Chamberlain inquired about the options for building materials other than brick. Mr. Burgin said other materials would save money, and he estimated a metal building could save approximately \$10 per square foot. Mr. Burgin asked the Board not to hold him to that number until he was able to confirm his estimate.

Commissioner Sides said the Board should stay within the budget. Commissioner Sides said he could not accept a cost of \$2.3 million more than what was allocated. Commissioner Sides said if DSS was currently operating in 45,000 square feet, it should continue to operate in 45,000 square feet.

Chairman Chamberlain said the Board had agreed on \$5.1 million and he felt the Board would be able to support that amount.

Mr. Burgin said he would continue to study what items could be eliminated in the plans.

Commissioner Sides said the DSS Board might need to discuss the options and become more involved in the plans.

12. OTHER PROJECTS AND DEBT STREAM

Finance Director Leslie Heidrick provided the following comments regarding finances for the year:

- Property taxes look good
- Sales tax does not look good - expecting sales tax to be short of budget
- Expenditures are consistent with prior years

Ms. Heidrick said for the first time in her tenure with the County, she did not believe that revenues would exceed expenditures. Ms. Heidrick estimated that revenues would fall short in the range of \$1 to \$2 million. Ms. Heidrick said in prior years, Finance Staff was instructed to use additional funds for capital improvement projects. Ms. Heidrick felt the reason expenditures were greater was due to the number of capital improvement projects that were being completed this year.

Ms. Heidrick said if the Board were to “max out” the debt capacity, taxes would have to be raised approximately \$0.80.

Ms. Heidrick briefly listed the expenditures she anticipated the County would need to finance. Ms. Heidrick discussed the proposed capital improvement projects (CIP) and said the list did not include the presentation from Telecommunications.

Ms. Heidrick discussed the school system debt service and said with no additional revenue, it would be 2017 before the County could fund any CIP for the schools.

Ms. Heidrick discussed the Bond Rating Analysis for Aa3 Counties and said she thought the County compared favorably.

Commissioner Sides said Ms. Heidrick understood the Board’s dilemma and the County’s needs, but that she knew projects had to be prioritized.

Chairman Chamberlain called for a short break at 2:20 pm.

Chairman Chamberlain reconvened the meeting at 2:30 pm.

13. DISCUSSION REGARDING BOARD PRIORITIES/WRAP-UP SESSION

Facilitator Larry Parks reviewed the funding requests and asked the Commissioners to rank the requests in order of priority. The Board ranked the requests as follows:

1 - Try to accomplish during FY 2009

2 - Supports the project, but it can wait until future budget years (beyond FY 2009)

3 - Project is "not on funding radar" at this time

Projects	Chairman Chamberlain	Commissioner Mitchell	Commissioner Sides	Commissioner Hall
Economic Development Commission Market Summit Corporate Center	1	1	1	1
Information Systems \$185,000 - Microsoft enterprise agreement \$50,000 - AS400 upgrade	1	1	1	1
Parks \$40,000 - restrooms at Sloan \$? - tennis courts at Dan Nicholas \$? - improvements at Fairgrounds	1	1	1	1
Sheriff \$3,000,000 - temporary jail	1	1	1	1
Social Services \$5,100,000 - new facility	1	1	1	1
Administration \$750,000 for four years - resolve salary compression issues	1	2	2	1
Telecommunications \$12,700,000 - public safety radio system	1	2	2	1
Airport \$5,200,000 - land acquisition \$10,900,000 - runway extension	2	2	2	2
Emergency Services Recruitment and retention \$800,000 - 15 employees \$325,000 - EMS Academy	2	2	2	2
Emergency Services \$1,000,000 - West Rowan station \$1,000,000 - additional station	2	2	2	2
Rowan-Salisbury Schools \$114,600,000 - capital needs	1¾	2	2½	2
Sheriff \$34,000,000 - 384-bed detention center \$7,500,000 - new office	3	3	3	3

Chairman Chamberlain inquired about the location of a Maintenance Shop. Mr. Deal said the Silver Eagle building has approximately 20,000 square feet available and the County would be able to lease that space. Mr. Deal said he would work on a cost for internal fencing for record storage, surveillance and maintenance equipment. Mr. Deal said he would also include costs for new shelving in order to move the maintenance shop to this location.

Commissioner Sides said the current lessee of the Silver Eagle building should be required to pay more for office space than he does for storage space.

Mr. Deal said the County is currently paying \$38,000 a year for maintenance space and he has spoken to the County Attorney about changing the lease to a month-to-month basis rather than yearly.

Chairman Chamberlain questioned the situation regarding the tenant who leases the county-owned property on Old Concord Road. Ms. Heidrick said the County Attorney had submitted a letter to the tenant, per the contract, providing fifteen (15) days to cure the default. Ms. Heidrick said if the tenant paid the owed lease amount by the due date, the County must allow her to remain on the property.

In response to Chairman Chamberlain's query, the Board was in agreement that if the tenant did not cure the default, the lease was void.

Chairman Chamberlain commented that this was his last year on the Board and his last retreat. Chairman Chamberlain said he had enjoyed working with everyone and he thanked Mr. Parks for keeping everyone on track.

Chairman Chamberlain ended the retreat with prayer.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Chamberlain adjourned the retreat at 2:55 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn Athey
Clerk to the Board