

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

January 20, 2009 – 7:00 PM

J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROOM

J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROWAN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Present: Carl Ford, Chairman
Jon Barber, Vice-Chairman
Raymond Coltrain, Member
Tina Hall, Member
Chad Mitchell, Member

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

Chairman Ford convened the meeting at 7:00 pm.

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

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commissioner Barber moved, Commissioner Coltrain seconded and the vote to approve the minutes of the December 31, 2008 and January 5, 2009 Commission Meetings passed unanimously.

CONSIDER ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

CONSIDER DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

There were no deletions from the agenda.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Mitchell moved approval of the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Barber and passed unanimously.

1. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Ford asked those in the audience from Youth Services Bureau to please stand and Liz Tennent, Program Director for Times 2 Mentoring, was in attendance. Chairman Ford thanked Ms. Tennent for the work of Youth Services Bureau and he noted that the Proclamation on the Consent Agenda was in recognition of the work of the agency.

Commissioner Barber moved approval of the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Coltrain and carried unanimously.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following items:

A. Approval of Proclamation Designating January 2009 as National Mentoring Month

WHEREAS, mentoring is a longstanding tradition in which a dependable, caring adult provides guidance, support and encouragement to facilitate a young person's social, emotional and cognitive development; and

WHEREAS, continued research on mentoring shows that formal, high-quality mentoring focused on developing the competence and character of the mentee promotes positive outcomes, such as improved academic achievement, self-esteem, social skills, and career development; and

WHEREAS, further research on mentoring provides strong evidence that mentoring successfully reduces substance use and abuse, academic failure and delinquency; and

WHEREAS, mentoring, in addition to preparing young people for school, work, and life, is extremely rewarding for those serving as mentors; and

WHEREAS, more than 4,200 mentoring programs in communities of all sizes across the United States including the Rowan County Youth Services Bureau focus on building strong relationships between mentors and mentees; and

WHEREAS, approximately 3,000,000 young people in the United States are in solid mentoring relationships due to the remarkable vigor, creativity, and resourcefulness of the thousands of mentoring programs throughout the Nation and here locally; and

WHEREAS, in spite of the progress made to increase mentoring, the Nation and our community has a serious "mentoring gap" for young people in need of mentors; and

WHEREAS, mentoring partnerships between the public and private sectors bring State and local leaders together in support of mentoring programs by preventing duplication of efforts, offering training in industry best practices, and making the most of limited resources to benefit young people; and

WHEREAS, the designation of January 2009 as National Mentoring Month will help call attention to the critical role mentors play in helping young people realize their potential; and

WHEREAS, a month-long celebration of mentoring will encourage more individuals and organizations, including schools, businesses, nonprofit organizations, faith institutions and foundations, to become engaged in mentoring across the United States and this community.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Board of Commissioners in Rowan County, North Carolina, does hereby proclaim the month of January 2009 as

NATIONAL MENTORING MONTH

in Rowan County, North Carolina recognizing with gratitude all those who serve as volunteer mentors in our community and encouraging our citizens and interested groups to become mentors and to observe the month with appropriate ceremonies and activities that promote awareness of and volunteer involvement with youth mentoring.

Commissioner Barber expressed appreciation to the mentors and mentees who from Youth Services Bureau who had attended and catered the Martin Luther King, Jr. Humanitarian Breakfast on the previous day.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Chairman Ford opened the Public Comment Period to receive comments from any citizens wishing to address the Board. The following individuals came forward:

- Rosalee Hart-Morrison, a local attorney, felt it was important, if possible, for the Board to extend the Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard to Interstate 85. Ms. Hart-Morrison recalled seeing an exit named after Dr. King in Winston-Salem and said it provided a sense of respect for that community regarding the importance of diversity and unity as a whole.
- Allen Welter, China Grove Council member, referred to the agenda topic regarding county employees seeking public office. Mr. Welter said he believed it to be a conflict of interest and said there were two (2) members on China Grove's Board who "hold back" from issues dealing with the county because they are county employees. Mr. Welter said he did not believe "they" should be allowed to run for elected positions where they would be in conflict with the county.
- Dwayne Dvoracek, a new resident to Rowan County, discussed the issue of county employees running for elected office. Mr. Dvoracek felt that any person or citizen of the United States should be allowed to run for any public office but once they were elected, he said conflicts would ensue and they should give up the conflicting interest (employment).
- Marian Rollans of western Rowan County asked the Board to consider numerous issues, some of which included not just incentives for private business interests but quality of life issues as a goal for all citizens. Ms. Rollans asked the Board to consider decisions that would save open space and farming to sustain future generations, natural resources, prevent urban sprawl and decisions that had not been bought behind

closed doors by individual financial interests. Ms. Rollans also presented the Board members with a book regarding farmland preservation.

- James Rollans of western Rowan County discussed the agenda topic pertaining to a policy for county employees seeking public office. Mr. Rollans said he hoped the Board would try to avoid conflicts of financial interest and abuse of power. Mr. Rollans also encouraged the Board not to exclude people from the democratic process of running for public office.
- Larry Wright discussed a recent letter in the Salisbury Post regarding the proposed increase to the hotel occupancy tax. Mr. Wright also discussed the issue of forced annexation and he thanked the Commissioners who had attended a meeting of the Joint Legislative Commission on Municipal Annexation on January 6, 2009. Mr. Wright praised Commissioner Tina Hall and Representative Fred Steen for their representation of Rowan County on the Committee. Mr. Wright encouraged interested citizens to attend the next Committee meeting in Raleigh on January 22, 2009.

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

3. RECOGNITION OF WEST ROWAN HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY FOOTBALL TEAM AS THE 3A STATE CHAMPIONS

Chairman Ford welcomed West Rowan Head Coach Scott Young and members of the West Rowan 2008 Varsity Football Team in honor of the team's outstanding 2008 football season and for winning the state championship title.

Chairman Ford read a Proclamation Honoring the West Rowan High School Varsity Football team as follows:

WHEREAS, the West Rowan High School Varsity Football Team, under Coach Scott Young and Staff, is to be recognized and honored for their outstanding 2008 football season; and

WHEREAS, by their extraordinary efforts, this dynamic team has won Regional, Sectional, and Conference titles and progressed to achieving the 3A State Championship Title and ending the season with an amazing record and a chapter in Rowan County history; and

WHEREAS, the individual efforts of all team members was crucial to the successful season; and the commitment and excellent performance of these young Rowan County men, along with their coaching staff, have proven to be a source of admiration and inspiration to the citizens of Rowan County; and

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT PROCLAIMED, that the Rowan County Board of Commissioners does hereby honor the West Rowan High School Varsity Football Team and Coaching Staff for their outstanding achievements and to commend them for their display of sportsmanship and leadership as they represented Rowan County.

Chairman Ford presented the Proclamation to Coach Young and stated that each player would also receive a Proclamation.

Chairman Ford then read and presented Coach Young with a plaque in honor of the team's accomplishments.

The presentations were followed by a standing ovation and a round of applause.

Chairman Ford pointed out that Commissioner Hall was wearing a West Rowan letter jacket in honor of the occasion. Chairman Ford also stated that Commissioner Barber had attended and played football for West Rowan High School.

Commissioner Barber recalled the days when he had played football for West Rowan and how the team had struggled to win games. Commissioner Barber congratulated the 2008 team for its successful season. Another round of applause followed the comments.

Chairman Ford called for a short recess at 7:20 pm.

Chairman Ford reconvened the meeting at 7:30 pm.

Commissioner Barber said he had learned during the recess that two (2) members of the West Rowan football team, Marco Gupton and Brantley Horton, had recently been selected to attend the Naval Academy.

4. UPDATE PERTAINING TO PROGRAMS OFFERING ASSISTANCE TO RECENT LAYOFFS

County Manager Gary Page reported that he had attended a meeting with Commissioner Coltrain and United Way Director Bob Lippard regarding layoff assistance programs that are available. Mr. Page said the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Employment Security Commission (ESC) would be able to go on-site to offer assistance to the Freightliner employees. Mr. Page said the 2-1-1 Program was a resource for health and human service information and was a referral agency to those needing assistance. Mr. Page said there would be a workshop later in the week for the programs that would be identified with the 2-1-1 Program.

Mr. Page continued by saying Rowan Cabarrus Community College (RCCC) would offer re-training programs and career counseling. Mr. Page said Food Lion representatives had discussed possible food distribution; the Salvation Army could provide food assistance, shelter and some rent assistance; Communities in Schools had a pool of uniforms and clothing for assistance to children in lower grades; Salisbury Community Development Commission was positioned to help with mortgage assistance, advice on refinancing and in some cases to provide

cash assistance; Consumer Credit for credit counseling; and Piedmont Behavioral Healthcare/Daymark for counseling.

Mr. Page said it was noted last week that there were approximately 1,740 individuals laid off this past year, with the majority of those being from Hanes Brand and Freightliner. Mr. Page said when the Pillowtex layoff occurred in 2003, DSS had been instrumental in assisting the displaced workers. Mr. Page said funds were established to offer assistance and DSS had been responsible for determining the eligibility criteria. Mr. Page reported that there was still a current balance of approximately \$25,000 unspent from the funds that had been set aside in 2003-04.

Mr. Page said there were many support programs in place and those needing assistance should contact 2-1-1 for direction.

In response to a query from Commissioner Barber, Mr. Page said based on the economy, there would be a strain on budgets and the need for additional assistance from the County.

Chairman Ford suggested that the information for layoff assistance programs be posted on the County's main webpage.

5. DISCUSSION REGARDING A POLICY FOR COUNTY EMPLOYEES SEEKING PUBLIC OFFICE

Commissioner Hall referred to the memo in the agenda packet from County Manager Gary Page regarding information to potentially revise the County's policy for county employees seeking public office. Commissioner Hall expressed appreciation to Mr. Page and County Attorney Jay Dees for their assistance concerning the policy.

Commissioner Hall reviewed applicable sections of the current county policy that dealt with political activities. The current policy does not prohibit an employee from running for an elected office.

Commissioner Hall discussed a recent Salisbury Post article pertaining to a county employee being in violation of the Hatch Act due to seeking public office. Commissioner Hall said the Board had the opportunity to review the current policy and if necessary, to update the policy.

Commissioner Hall said Mr. Page had provided sample policies from other counties for the Board to consider. Commissioner Hall said the first policy from Henderson County dealt not only with county employees running for elected office but also dealt with an elected official becoming a county employee. Commissioner Hall said the Wilkes County policy allowed employees to seek an elected office but they could not serve in an elected office while still a county employee.

Commissioner Mitchell said he would support a policy similar to Wilkes County, which allowed an employee to run for office but if elected required them to either surrender the elected office or their county position. Commissioner Mitchell also agreed with prohibiting a sitting Commissioner from accepting a position for county employment. Commissioner Mitchell said he did not have a problem with an employee running for office as long as they followed the other rules, such as no campaigning on county time, etc. Commissioner Mitchell said he was interested in a change to the county's current policy and that he preferred the Wilkes County version as opposed to the Henderson County version.

Commissioner Coltrain agreed with Commissioner Mitchell stating that he did not wish to take away the right to seek an elected office due to employment with the county. Commissioner Coltrain said he would like to see the County consider a policy similar to Wilkes County. Commissioner Coltrain said in regards to a sitting County Commissioners seeking employment with the County, it would be appropriate to excuse themselves from any topic that might be perceived as a conflict of interest.

Commissioner Barber said he would support the County Attorney creating revised language for the policy for the Board's review and for a vote in a near meeting.

Chairman Ford assigned a committee consisting of himself, Commissioner Hall, Mr. Page and Mr. Dees to work on proposed language for the policy. Chairman Ford said the committee would keep the Board informed of its progress. Chairman Ford said the policy would become part of personnel policies.

In response to a query from Commissioner Mitchell, Mr. Dees recommended that the Board go through the public hearing process before adopting the policy.

6. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENTS

Finance Director Leslie Heidrick presented the following budget amendments for the Board's consideration:

- Sheriff's Office – To recognize funds from Bulletproof Vest partnership Grant and place in expense account to allow for purchase of vests - \$2,028
- Social Services – To Budget \$15,000 in Special Adoption funds. The department received these funds as a reward for finalizing the adoption of a teenager

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

7. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Barber moved to adjourn at 7:53 pm. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Coltrain and passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn Athey
Clerk to the Board