

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

February 16, 2015 – 6:00 PM

J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROOM

J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROWAN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Present: Greg Edds, Chairman
Jim Greene, Vice-Chairman
Mike Caskey, Member
Judy Klusman, Member
Craig Pierce, Member

County Manager Aaron Church, Clerk to the Board/Assistant to the County Manager Carolyn Barger, County Attorney Jay Dees and Assistant County Manager/Finance Director Leslie Heidrick were present.

Chairman Edds convened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

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

Chairman Edds welcomed a member (Matthew) of Boy Scout Troop #443 for attending the meeting. The welcome was followed by a round of applause.

CONSIDER ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

Commissioner Caskey requested to move the Proclamation for Severe Weather Week from the Consent Agenda to the regular agenda.

Chairman Edds placed the issue as item #3a in the order of discussion.

The request passed unanimously.

CONSIDER DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA

There were no deletions from the agenda.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner Klusman moved, Commissioner Caskey seconded and the vote to approve the agenda passed unanimously.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commissioner Caskey moved, Commissioner Klusman seconded and the vote to approve the minutes of the February 5, 2015 Commission Meeting passed unanimously.

1. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Caskey moved approval of the Consent Agenda (as amended). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman and passed unanimously.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

- A. Proclamation Recognizing Severe Weather Awareness Week (moved to the regular agenda as item #3a)
- B. Refunds for Approval
- C. Set Public Hearing for Z 02-15 for March 2, 2015
- D. FY 15-16 HOME Application / Administration
- E. Z 01-15 and CUP 01-15 Carolina Quarries: Schedule Quasi-Judicial Hearing for march 2, 2015
- F. Blanche and Julian Robertson Family Foundation, Inc. Grant Application
- G. Revision to Grant Agreement with NCDOT Regarding Gildan Access Road
- H. RFP for Auctioneering Services for Surplus Furniture in Storage
- I. Resolution in Support of Current National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone
- J. Agreement with Duke Energy for Use of West End Plaza Parking Lot in Support of Electric Power Restoration
- K. Transfer of Vehicles with Rowan County Rescue Squad
- L. Sale of Surplus Vehicles

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

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

- Rick Johnson discussed the Veteran Services Office (VSO) and provided statistics regarding funding and personnel for other VSO's across the State. Mr. Johnson asked the Board to consider providing more space and representation in the Rowan County VSO in order to serve more veterans.

Chairman Edds asked Mr. Johnson to email the numbers he had mentioned to the County Manager for distribution.

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

3. PRESENTATION REGARDING REBRANDING OF ROWAN COUNTY

James Meacham, Executive Director of the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), presented a power point presentation and discussed how to brand Rowan County for economic development.

Mr. Meacham said the CVB had developed a partnership proposal to submit to the Board of Commissioners (BOC) and he expressed thanks to Commissioner Pierce for his advice and support as the BOC's liaison to the CVB.

Mr. Meacham explained the three (3) parts of the program: to establish the brand, the digital infrastructure, and the launching of the brand.

Mr. Meacham described the seven (7) C's possessed by strong brands as being: 1) Competitive Edge; 2) Customer-Focused; 3) Clarity; 4) Credibility; 5) Customer Service; 6) Consistency; and 7) Creates a dissatisfaction with the status quo.

According to Mr. Meacham, the objectives with a community branding approach would be to guide the future, ensure that the stakeholder delivers upon the experience expected by customers, and to be competitive.

Mr. Meacham discussed how the branding would work with the many pockets of specialty groups, such as the CVB, the Economic Development Commission, etc.

By using the master brand of Marriott as an example, Mr. Meacham showed how a brand would facilitate itself with various different segments.

Mr. Meacham talked about best practices for community branding, including the opportunity to rally internal stakeholders. Mr. Meacham said ultimately that branding had to work with external audiences.

The second part of branding, according to Mr. Meacham would be a major overhaul of the CVB's digital infrastructure. Mr. Meacham said a key tool was how the infrastructure interfaced with the community and potential customers.

Mr. Meacham said the brand launch or brand marketing campaign, would be a multifaceted campaign to create greater impact and to push the new brand. Also, Mr. Meacham said there would be a proposal to develop new collateral, such as letterhead, banners, etc., to include the imagery to sell and push the brand.

Mr. Meacham said the branding initiative could cost approximately \$500,000. Mr. Meacham provided a breakdown as follows:

- \$150,000 for developing the brand
- \$200,000 for the digital infrastructure
- \$150,000 for the marketing campaign

Mr. Meacham said the CVB had already secured the \$500,000 for the initiative.

Mr. Meacham said the request was for the BOC to enter into a partnership with the CVB on the branding initiative by establishing a Commission-appointed Branding Task Force (Task Force) that would oversee development of the new brand. Mr. Meacham said the Task Force should come from a cross section of the community, covering various geographic locations, business centers, socio-economics, and parameters that would make the Task Force truly representative of Rowan County. The Task Force would oversee the process and work with CVB, Rowan County staff and different community organizations to solicit and find the qualified branding firm and create the brand.

Mr. Meacham said the CVB recommended appointing Michelle Patterson of Patterson Farms to serve as Chair of the Task Force. Mr. Meacham highlighted Ms. Patterson's background experience as justification for the recommendation.

Commissioner Pierce asked Mr. Meacham to provide a synopsis of where the funds for the CVB come from, in order to provide clarification to the public the dollars to be provided would not come from the County.

Mr. Meacham said the CVB was funded by a hotel tax paid by visitors staying in hotels in Rowan County and the City of Salisbury. Mr. Meacham said the benefit of the branding would be to reach the customers who do not live in Rowan County.

Chairman Edds said he was thrilled about the project and partnership. Chairman Edds said he was glad to have a member of the BOC who would be part of the process.

Chairman Edds opened the floor for a motion to establish a Task Force to oversee the development of the new Rowan County brand. Commissioner Pierce so moved with a second by Commissioner Klusman. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Greene moved to appoint Michelle Patterson as Chair of the Task Force. Commissioner Klusman seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

3a. PROCLAMATION FOR SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK

(This agenda item was pulled from the Consent Agenda for discussion).

Commissioner Caskey commented as to the adverse weather conditions (snow and sleet) and said he wanted to take the opportunity to thank the emergency personnel who were working tonight. Commissioner Caskey also noted that many of the emergency services workers were staying overnight at their respective stations to be ready to assist as needed.

Chairman Edds stated he was on a conference call earlier in the day with emergency personnel and he was struck by their professionalism and genuine concern for the community. Chairman Edds listed some of the participants in the conference call as EMS, firemen, the Rescue Squad, hospital staff, Duke Energy and Red Cross. Chairman Edds said he appreciated what was being done for the citizens and that prayers would go out for all involved tonight.

Commissioner Caskey moved to approve the Proclamation. Commissioner Klusman seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The Proclamation read as follows:

WHEREAS, emergency preparedness is a function of government, dependent upon the leadership of executive officers and the efforts of many career first responders and volunteers; *and*

WHEREAS, weather hazards can be extremely severe resulting in deaths, injuries, and extensive property damage; *and*

WHEREAS, severe thunderstorms, that bring damaging winds, lightning, flash floods, and tornadoes, frequent the spring and summer Rowan County landscape and have often placed in jeopardy lives and property; *and*

WHEREAS, under the coordination of the National Weather Service with the strong support of the State of North Carolina, local county emergency management, and a number of state, federal, local and volunteer agencies and business will be informing and educating the public on steps that should be taken to survive the severe weather hazards and the potential disasters that this spring may bring; *and*

WHEREAS, by taking reasonable precautions, citizens of Rowan County and its municipalities can reduce the loss of life and property and also decrease the effects of severe weather on our local resources and economy.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Rowan County Board of Commissioners does hereby proclaim March 1 - 7, 2015 to be **SEVERE WEATHER AWARENESS WEEK** in Rowan County, and urges all citizens to cooperate wholeheartedly with the authorized agencies of our local government who will be providing appropriate preparedness information for the 2015 spring and summer season and to avail themselves of all possible assistance for their protection and for the prevention of serious accidents or unexpected disasters during this period.

4. COMMISSION SPONSORED EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION EVENTS

Chairman Edds read the memorandum in the agenda packet from County Manager Aaron Church. The memorandum explained that during the Board of Commissioners' (BOC) retreat there was discussion of providing an appreciation meal for employees by department. According to Mr. Church, the Commissioners discussed having a county picnic as well.

Commissioner Caskey talked about hardships on employees during the recession and felt the suggestions would be good for the employees.

Mr. Church said if approved, the Board could authorize the Manager to move money from contingency to an Employee Appreciation line item.

Commissioner Pierce suggested diverting funds from the upcoming surplus automobile and furniture auction for this particular project.

Mr. Church said if the Board wished to earmark the revenue from the auction for the appreciation events, the Board could be asked to replenish the Contingency Fund when the monies came in.

Commissioner Caskey asked which route would be the least complicated from the Finance Director's viewpoint. Finance Director Leslie Heidrick responded "to appropriate it from contingency".

Commissioner Caskey asked if the monies would be moved back to the contingency fund after the vehicle sale. Ms. Heidrick responded that for many years no monies had been taken from the contingency fund at all; however, the fund was there to be used for a purpose. Ms. Heidrick said there was no reason to put the money back but the Board could at a later date.

Commissioner Caskey moved to authorize the County Manager to move \$13,000 for the employee dinners and picnic. Commissioner Pierce seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

5. CONSIDER LEASING PROPERTY TO FAIR ASSOCIATION

County Manager Aaron Church said a Commissioner had requested he prepare an agenda item to lease Parcel 402 089 on Julian Road to the Fairgrounds for fifteen (15) years. Mr. Church said the Fair Association would like to lease the property for \$1.00 per year and that they would be responsible for grading the area for parking.

Commissioner Klusman moved to approve the lease to the Fair Association. Commissioner Pierce seconded the motion for discussion.

Commissioner Pierce said his concern was that the trees on the property, according to the Forestry Service, had not reached full maturity. Commissioner Pierce said he understood Commissioner Greene requested the Board to look at possibly cutting and selling the timber. At the current rate, Commissioner Pierce said an additional ten (10) year period was needed for the trees to reach full maturity. Commissioner Pierce said he wanted to help the Fair Association but he did not want to do it at the expense of the County citizens. Commissioner Pierce requested language be put into the agreement specifying how much property was needed for parking, as well as language to prevent the Fair Association from clearing the entire twenty-four (24) acres.

In response to an inquiry from Chairman Edds, Mr. Church described the “lions share” of the property as pines with hardwoods mixed throughout. According to Mr. Church, the Forestry Service had looked at the property and determined if the whole twenty-four (24) acres were to be cut tomorrow, the value would be \$20,000 to \$40,000. Mr. Church went on to state that if the cut were to take place in ten (10) years when the trees have reached maturity, the value would be approximately \$50,000 to \$70,000. Mr. Church said if the Fair Association wanted to use only a portion of the property over the next few years, the remaining section could be reserved and timbered later.

Chairman Edds asked if Commissioner Pierce would like to table the request until the next meeting so that a plan could be presented. Commissioner Pierce responded he would like to table the matter in order for the Board to be presented with a diagram of the property showing where the timber lines were located. Commissioner Pierce said work could be done with the Fair Association to identify the minimum amount of clearing needed to facilitate current parking needs. Commissioner Pierce said he did not want to stifle the Fair Association’s growth nor did he want the project to cost the taxpayers. Commissioner Pierce said he would like to see more than just a statement, so he would like to table the request in order to get more information and to get the most value for the County’s property.

Commissioner Greened inquired about language that would allow the County to take the land back and Chairman Edds said there was a thirty (30) day notice built into the agreement.

Commissioner Klusman withdrew her motion.

Commissioner Pierce moved to table the lease for further information. Commissioner Caskey seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

6. LGC FINANCING OF WEST END PLAZA

Chairman Edds read the memorandum in the agenda packet regarding the Board of Commissioners’ (BOC) desire to move forward with an application for financing of the West End Plaza.

Commissioner Pierce moved to ask the Local Government Commission (LGC) to put the County’s application back on their agenda for approval. Commissioner Klusman seconded.

Commissioner Greene asked for clarification on the amount of the application and Commissioner Pierce responded \$3.95 million. Commissioner Pierce said the current application was already with the LGC and the County was requesting the LGC put it back on their agenda.

Upon being put to a vote, the motion on the floor passed unanimously.

7. UP-FITTING WEST END PLAZA

Chairman Edds said the Board of Commissioners (BOC) held a discussion at its recent Strategic Planning Retreat (Retreat) concerning whether to move forward with executed contracts to up-fit the West End Plaza for the Board of Elections (BOE) and Veterans Services Office (VSO). Chairman Edds said another option was to wait for the Space Needs Study and Master Plan to be completed. A consensus was not reached during the Retreat.

Chairman Edds reviewed the four (4) options presented by Mr. Church in the agenda packet. The first option that Mr. Church shared was going out for bid on the \$600,000 design by REI to repair the roof and moving forward with the construction after the Conditional Use Permit (CUP) was approved. The second option that Mr. Church shared was to authorize the Manager to ask REI to design a plan and go out for bid for roofing that only replaces the roof over the proposed BOE and VSO locations. Following the bid, there would a move forward with construction after the CUP was approved.

A third option would be to direct the County Manager to cancel the previously approved contracts with LaFave's Construction and stop all activity involving new construction or new tenants until the Space Needs Study and Master Plan were complete.

Commissioner Pierce said there were concerns with doing roofing in sections. Commissioner Pierce said he had spoken with several roofing contractors and doing the BOE and VSO separately would not cost anymore than waiting to do all the work at one time. Commissioner Pierce said it was also discussed at the Retreat that doing the center concourse with a new roof and putting the old air handlers back on top would be counter productive. Commissioner Pierce said there were costs budgeted for the up-fit for the BOE and VSO for new air handlers, with the only additional cost being for the insulation to go over those areas.

Commissioner Pierce moved to go out for bid for roofing for those two (2) areas (VSO and BOE) and proceed with construction when the CUP was approved. Commissioner Caskey seconded the motion.

Commissioner Klusman stated she would much rather consider motion #3. Commissioner Klusman said the Space Needs Study and the Master Plan were needed before making a decision. Commissioner Klusman said it would not be long before the studies were ready and she felt the community would feel more comfortable knowing the entire plan.

Commissioner Greene called for the question and upon being put to a vote, the motion on the floor failed 2-3 with Commissioners Edds, Greene and Klusman dissenting.

Commissioner Klusman moved to recommend motion #3 to direct the Manager to cancel the previously approved contracts with LaFave's Construction and stop all activity that involves new construction or new tenants until the Space Needs Study and Master Plan were complete. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greene.

Commissioner Pierce expressed his displeasure with the current Commission.

Chairman Edds clarified he felt the general public was not against owning the West End Plaza but rather the public wanted to be sold on owning it and what the plans would be for its use. Chairman Edds said the prior BOC ordered a space needs study and the purpose of the study was to learn which departments needed space. Chairman Edds said the BOC would hear from the study in March and he felt the study would show there were needs. Chairman Edds said the architectural firm was also preparing a master plan that would assist the County in showing what the facility would look like in the end. Chairman Edds he was only talking about a few more weeks before a presentation could be made to the general public.

Commissioner Pierce pointed out that once a contract was cancelled, the project had to be put out for bid, etc. and the BOE and VSO would be out another six (6) months from the start of construction.

Chairman Edds called for a five (5) minute recess at 6:45 p.m.

Chairman Edds reconvened the meeting reconvened at 6:50 p.m.

Commissioner Caskey said since the issue had been going on for a while, he understood the concerns in wanting to get the master plan and space needs study completed. Commissioner Caskey asked, if the motion passed, would there be any interest from the Board in asking the County Manager to find other temporary space for the VSO until the matter could be worked out. Commissioner Caskey said the VSO could be in violation of HIPPA laws when medical issues were being discussed.

Upon being put to a vote, the motion on the floor passed 3-2 with Commissioners Pierce and Caskey dissenting.

Commissioner Caskey moved to ask the County Manager to find some temporary space for the VSO until a permanent spot could be identified. Commissioner Pierce seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

8. CONSIDER APPOINTMENT OF ANIMAL CONTROL TASK FORCE

Commissioner Pierce said he had been approached by several groups with concerns over Animal Control and policies concerning volunteers at the Animal Shelter. Commissioner Pierce continued by explaining that after a County

reorganization, Animal Control was moved from the Health Department and put under the supervision of County Manager. Due to the reorganization, new policies would need to be written for Animal Control. Commissioner Pierce said there had been mention of a Task Force being put together to satisfy the citizens in ways to operate Animal Control. Commissioner Pierce recommended a nine (9) member Task Force over the ten (10)-member Task Force outlined in the packet agenda packet in order to avoid any tie votes on issues.

Commissioner Pierce highlighted the members he felt should make up the Task Force as two (2) Veterinarians, four (4) citizens, the Animal Control Director, and one (1) County official and the County Manager. Commissioner Pierce did not agree that one (1) elected municipal office should be appointed (as suggested in the agenda packet). Commissioner Pierce said the Task Force would be put in place until policies and procedures for Animal Control could be brought before the Board for a vote and implemented into policy.

Commissioner Pierce moved to form an Animal Task Control Force with nine (9) members with the breakdown listed, except for the elected municipal official. Commissioner Pierce stated there were ten (10) municipalities and favoritism should not be shown. Commissioner Caskey seconded.

Commissioner Klusman said she would prefer to stick with the initial list in the hope that there would be a consensus to come out of the Task Force and not having it be split. Commissioner Klusman said she felt there needed to be an elected official.

Chairman Edds said he agreed with Commissioner Pierce and he had rather see the County Manager on the task force over a municipal official and he felt there needed to be an odd number.

Commissioner Greene also agreed with Commissioner Pierce and said it would be hard to pick one elected municipal official over another.

Upon being put to a vote, the motion on the floor passed unanimously.

9. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BUDGET AMENDMENTS

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

- Animal Control – To budget additional revenues and expenditures for the Animal Shelter due to an increase in adoption - \$40,000
- Emergency Services – Funds received into Contributions – Private/Miscellaneous as revenue need to be appropriated to Donation Expenditures for future use - \$600
- Health Department – Add funds from Delta Dental Foundation to pay for office supplies, printing and medical supplies - \$4,000

- Finance – To recognize reserved funds from FY 2014 for the Health Department. Reserved funds represent money received by a Department for restricted purpose. The funds that have not been spent by year-end are budgeted for expenditures in the new fiscal year - \$4,266
- Sheriff – Recognize funds received in Walmart Foundation Grant and budget to the proper expense account - \$2,500
- Social Services – Expenditures and revenues are revised based on Funding Authorizations received from the State. Funding Authorizations reflect the actual amount DSS receives and may increase or decrease the original budget estimates. In addition, DSS is requesting to budget donations in order to provide goods and services to clients – \$287,100
- Finance – To budget revenues and expenditures for a Locally Administered Project-State Public Access Agreement between NCDOT, Woodleaf Volunteer Fire Department and Rowan County. This project was originally approved by the Board of Commissioners on August 5, 2013. This project has been completed and Woodleaf VFD is requesting payment - \$13,800

Commissioner Caskey moved approval of the budget amendments as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pierce and passed unanimously.

10. CLOSED SESSION

Chairman Edds moved at 7:01 p.m. for the Board to enter Closed Session in accordance with North Carolina General Statute § 143-318.11(a)(5) to discuss a possible acquisition of real property regarding a potential EMS site. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pierce and passed unanimously.

The Board returned to open session at 7:17 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Klusman moved to adjourn at 7:18 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Greene and passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Carolyn Barger, MMC, NCCCC
 Clerk to the Board/
 Assistant to the County Manager