

*Scotland County Board of Commissioners and Laurinburg City Council joint session
January 12, 2012, Laurinburg City Council Chamber*

MINUTES

**Scotland County Board of Commissioners
Reconvened Meeting and Joint Session with City of Laurinburg, January 12, 2012
City Council Chamber, Laurinburg NC**

At 6 p.m. Chairman Bob Davis reconvened the meeting. Commissioners in attendance: Chairman Davis, Vice Chair Joyce McDow and Commissioners John Alford, John Cooley, Carol McCall and Guy McCook. Commissioners not in attendance: Commissioner Clarence McPhatter. Staff in attendance: County Manager Kevin Patterson, County Attorney Ed Johnston and Clerk to the Board Ann W. Kurtzman. Commissioner Alford moved and Vice Chair McDow seconded approval of reconvening the meeting.

City Council Members in attendance: Mayor Tommy Parker (arrived at 6:05 p.m.), Pro Tem Kenton Spencer and Council Members Mary Jo Adams, Curtis Leak and Drew Williamson. City Council Members not in attendance: Herbert Rainer. City staff in attendance: City Manager Ed Burchins and City Clerk Jenny Tippet. Mayor Pro Tem Spencer reconvened the City meeting with approval of the City Council Members. Mayor Pro Tem Spencer provided the invocation.

Consolidation of Services: Information Technology and GIS

County Manager Patterson and City Manager Burchins discussed current IT staffing at the County and City, including the use of some privatized support for the City. Mr. Patterson discussed the similarities between IT at the City and County, which include a shared fiber system and similar phone system. Both said there could be positive outcomes from consolidating IT services.

There was lengthy discussion on how and why GIS became part of the consolidation proposal. Commissioner McCook said he saw no problem with including GIS in an overall plan since the County and City already share the service.

Council Member Leak disagreed because a GIS study was not previously approved by City Council as an agenda item. He said he is comfortable with the GIS service as it currently stands.

Mayor Tommy Parker suggested that IT and GIS studies be voted on separately and when acting on GIS the City make sure the County is current on remuneration of City GIS services.

Commissioner Cooley said any consolidation that would be a mutual benefit is worth exploring. Commissioner McCall said there is no reason to wait on a GIS study until after IT is explored.

City Council approved authorizing the City to join with the County to look at GIS services. Council Member Leak voted against the motion. City Council approved exploring the consolidation of IT services.

Motion was made by Commissioner McCook and duly seconded by Commissioner McCall to proceed with an IT and GIS plan at the same time. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

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Consolidation of Services: Planning, zoning, code enforcement and mapping

Mr. Patterson said the City has a more robust planning and zoning department while last year, the County only had six rezoning requests. Mr. Patterson said there is opportunity to create and staff a single planning and zoning unit and code enforcement service. Mr. Patterson said the two governing bodies might look at consolidating the planning and zoning boards, although that would require a local act. Mr. Patterson said if there is interest, the City and County would look to eliminate any overlap in services in this area.

Commissioner Alford said he found the system as it is now confusing and he has heard from others who agree with him. This is a concern for him as a public official.

Chairman Davis and Commissioner McCook agreed the City and County should look at planning and zoning and code enforcement in order to develop a plan. They asked that the City and County also look at the use of the Sanford Building as part of the plan.

The City Council moved and seconded a motion for City and County staff to proceed with developing a plan.

Motion was made by Commissioner McCook and duly seconded by Commissioner McCall to proceed with development of a planning, zoning and code enforcement plan. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Consolidation of Services: Tax collections

County Manager Patterson said the County still possesses a 2004 contract for the County to bill and collect taxes for the City. Mr. Patterson said although City officials never executed the contract, East Laurinburg, Wagram and Gibson did. Mr. Patterson said if the City is interested, the contract could be executed effective July 1, 2012.

Mr. Patterson said the tax collection would neither save money nor make money for the County or the City, but there would be one site for tax collection, which would be a convenience for citizens.

The County Manager said he would provide interested Commissioners and City Council Members with a tax collections service review, which would include a visit to the City and County tax collections locations.

The City Council moved and seconded a motion to revisit tax collections within 30 days.

Chairman Davis called for a break. The meeting resumed at 7:30 p.m.

Consolidation of Services: Water systems

City Manager Burchins said in the past there was discussion about merging the City water system with the County water districts. Mr. Burchins said the City and County might look at the formation of a water authority, which would be allowable under GS 153A-278. Mr. Burchins

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said Laurinburg-Maxton Airport would be included in the study. Mr. Burchins said the study could take from two to two and a half years.

Commissioner Alford said even if there was a water authority, elected officials should be the parties responsible when it comes to setting the rate structure.

The City Council moved and seconded a motion to review all water assets in order to develop an operational water program under a single authority that ensures the City and the County reserves the right to adjust the rates.

Commissioner McCook said the towns of Wagram and Gibson, Laurinburg-Maxton Airport and WestPoint Stevens should be included in the study.

Motion was made by Commissioner Alford and duly seconded by Vice Chair McDow to proceed with a study of the water systems.

Commissioner Alford suggested that LRCOG Director James Perry be a participant in the study because of his expertise and research he has done on an area water project.

Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Council Member Spencer suggested that progress reports be made to the governing bodies every six months on the water study.

Lighting at exits 183 and 184 off Highway 74

City Manager Burchins said the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) asked the County and the City to support the lighting of two exits off US74, exits 183 and 184, which lead to area restaurants, retailers and lodging.

Total cost of lighting the two exits is \$454,864. NCDOT pledged \$100,000 toward the project, and the TDA pledged a \$100,000 match. Mr. Burchins said the TDA asked City officials for the balance. Mr. Burchins asked if the County would be interested in participating in some way.

Mayor Parker said the City has an interest in this project because the lighted exits would represent a safe place to stop, buy food and provide places to sleep. It also would protect jobs.

Vice Chair McDow said the request concerns her since the County laid people off and the budget this year is much tighter than before. Vice Chair McDow said she would like to discuss it at the Budget Retreat. Chairman Davis agreed and said the Commissioners would make a decision at that time.

Mayor Parker suggested the County consider taking responsibility for the power for five years, which is a small component of the entire project, at a cost of \$8,000 to \$15,000 a year.

Commissioner McCook asked the County Manager to provide maps and details about the project.

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Council Member Leak said the City does not have \$254,000 to go it alone. He suggested the County commit \$100,000. Council Member Leak asked the Commissioners how much they would bring to the table.

Memorandum of Agreement: Inspections

Mr. Patterson said the Memorandum of Agreement is a procedural issue where the City would authorize the County to conduct building inspections inside the City limits.

Mr. Patterson provided an update on the 911 call center and the possibility of securing more grant funding by consolidating efforts with Richmond County. He explained the partnership would allow both counties to construct identical call centers and incorporate a redundancy in the 911 call structure.

The City Council moved and seconded a motion to have the County draft a Memorandum of Agreement for Inspections with the City.

Southeastern Economic Development Commission (SEDC) appointment information

Vice Chair McDow said there is an opening for appointment to the Southeastern Economic Development Commission (SEDC), which previously was held by former Council Member Rembert Deberry. Vice Chair McDow said the SEDC appointment is open to any elected official who is a minority. Economic Developer Greg Icard said SEDC is a membership-based where member governments are eligible for EDA grants.

Commissioner McCall invited the City Council to a public input session on guns in parks 5:30 p.m. Thursday, January 19, at the Courthouse. Commissioner McCall said she, Parks and Recreation Director Shannon Newton and Mr. Patterson will discuss the issue at a Live on Main segment the morning of January 17.

The City Council moved and seconded to adjourn.

Motion was made by Commissioner Alford and duly seconded by Commissioner Cooley to adjourn. Vote: Motion unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

Ann W. Kurtzman
Clerk to the Board

Bob Davis
Chairman