

MINUTES

**Scotland County Board of Commissioners
Reconvened Meeting and Joint Session with City of Laurinburg, May 26, 2010
507 West Covington Street, Laurinburg NC**

At 4 p.m. Chairman J. D. Willis reconvened the meeting. Commissioners in attendance: Chairman Willis, Vice Chair Betty Blue Gholston and Commissioners Bob Davis, Guy McCook and Joyce McDow. Commissioners not in attendance: Commissioners John Alford and Clarence McPhatter. Staff in attendance: County Manager Kevin Patterson and Clerk to the Board Ann W. Kurtzman.

City Council Members in attendance: Mayor Matthew Block and Council Members Joy Ellison, Tommy Parker, Curtis Leak and Kenton Spencer. City staff in attendance: City Manager Ed Burchins and Deputy City Clerk Jenny Tippett.

Chairman Willis and Mayor Block reconvened the respective meetings. Chairman Willis delivered the opening prayer.

Discussion: WestPoint Stevens Water project and other water services

Mr. Dave Zimmer of CDM, an engineering consulting firm, presented a PowerPoint on the City of Laurinburg and Scotland County Water System Evaluation.

Mr. Zimmer discussed the current City and County water systems and water demand projections through 2035. He then outlined three water system alternatives from 2010 through 2035. A baseline alternative would include making improvements to meet the needs of the City and County. Alternative A would add supply treatment water to Moore County and Pinehurst. Alternative B would include the supply of raw water to Moore County and Pinehurst.

Mr. Zimmer said it would not be necessary to purchase WestPoint Stevens water plant unless there exists a large industrial customer that would use the plant for its water services. Mr. Zimmer said it is important to “stay at the table” and continue regional water discussions.

Mr. Burchins said Campbell Soup would qualify as a large industrial customer, and the company indicated it would be interested in wastewater services through WestPoint Stevens. Mr. Burchins added that by negotiating a take or pay contract, Campbell Soup as a water customer would make it worthwhile to pursue the possibility of purchasing the WestPoint Stevens water plant. Mr. Zimmer agreed that Campbell Soup as a potential customer would make the decision to purchase a lot easier.

Mr. Zimmer explained the possibility of consolidation of water services. He displayed pre-consolidation and post-consolidation expenditures and revenues for the County and the City. In pre-consolidation, the County shows a deficit in revenues while in post-consolidation both the County and the City would have a net positive in revenues.

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Mr. Zimmer said over time, with rate adjustments, both the City and the County would be in positive revenue positions. Mr. Zimmer recommended the City and County move forward with water consolidation and confirm a consolidated water rate structure.

The Board of Commissioners by consensus agreed to move forward with the water consolidation effort.

The City Council by consensus also agreed to move forward with water consolidation.

Chairman Willis suggested County Manager Kevin Patterson and City Manager Ed Burchins work with the City and County attorneys on proceeding with the consolidation process.

(A break was called, and the meeting resumed at 5:20 p.m.)

Speller Building project

County Manager Patterson discussed the possibility of the County Tax Office and City utilities billing moving to the Speller Building. The move would free space for DSS and the Laurinburg Police Department. Mr. Patterson said the move also would create a centralized, one-stop location for City and County services. Mr. Patterson warned that space in the Speller Building would be at capacity from day one.

Mr. Patterson estimated the renovation, installation of a security wall and extension to the waiting area would be \$225,000 and \$300,000 with furniture moved and in place. Mr. Patterson said the \$300,000 estimate does not include making use of the neighboring Sanford building.

Mr. Burchins said it was determined the roof on the Sanford building has a 15-year life expectancy. He suggested the Sanford building be used for space overflow.

Mr. Patterson said \$150,000 is in the proposed FY 2010-2011 budget for the capital expenditure. Mr. Patterson said the County would budget for the custodian position and supplies if the City would pay utilities and share in the capital cost.

The Board of Commissioners and the Laurinburg City Council by consensus agreed to move forward with the Speller building project.

Discussion: Tax consolidation

Mr. Patterson proposed the County look at one tax collection system. Mr. Burchins said a goal would be to cross train all individuals who would work at the collection windows so they would be familiar with the procedure.

Chairman Willis directed Mr. Patterson and Tax Administrator Mary Helen Norton to meet with Mr. Burchins to develop a proposal that both governing boards could review and agree upon.

Recreational opportunities

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Commissioner Guy McCook said the County, City and Schools are pooling resources to maximize opportunities regarding an open gym concept. Commissioner McCook said the three entities are looking at ways to provide youth access to one or more gyms on a controlled, supervised basis. He said there would be staff on site and structured programming.

Commissioner McCook said it is hoped the open gyms would be available in July or August once resources and funding issues are resolved. Commissioner McCook estimated the cost at \$40 an hour to keep a facility open.

On another topic of recreation, Mayor Block said a committee of 15 to 20 people representing various entities has been formed to look into the development of an indoor recreation facility, which would also serve as a community center and performing arts center.

Chairman Willis asked if the recreation facility would be at the James L. Morgan Recreation Complex. Mayor Block said the site would be more centrally located in the City.

Chairman Willis said the County would participate in funding such a facility if it was located at the Morgan Complex as specified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Chairman Willis added that the Board of Commissioners made no promises to provide \$5,000 for a City/County feasibility study. He said the Master Plan addresses a recreation center, and the Master Plan was the result of a lot of work by many people who gathered public input that would community needs.

Commissioner McCook said the recreation facility concept is worthy of continued discussion on what the community wants, the pros and cons and the availability of funding.

Chairman Willis said the County, meanwhile intends to put \$10,000 in its budget as its matching portion for a summer program.

(Vice Chair Gholston was excused at 5:45 p.m.)

Other comments

Chairman Willis asked City officials about the status of the fire contract.

City Manager Burchins said the City Council has not yet taken action. Mr. Burchins briefly discussed vehicle replacement needs of the City fire departments. Mr. Burchins said recommendations to the City Council have not been made yet because the costs and provision of fire services inside and out of the County are still being evaluated.

City Council Member Leak said the recommendations would be presented to City Council in June so they could be presented to the County Commissioners in July.

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Commissioner McCook suggested another joint meeting between the County and the City be scheduled so complete contract information and fire services could be shared.

County Manager Patterson said the contract under discussion includes wording from the State Fire Marshall. Mr. Patterson said the contract the County currently has with the fire departments is 20 years old, and the intent is to update the verbiage. Mr. Patterson explained the financial allocations among the fire departments. He said based on the formula, Laurel Hill and Laurinburg fire services receive the highest financial distributions.

Mr. Patterson said the County was made aware of vehicle replacements for the fire departments, and a fire truck replacement plan is needed because the County will be asked to replace at least 10 vehicles over the next 10 years. Mr. Patterson said the fire tax does not generate that kind of revenue to support replacement of fire trucks.

Motion was made by Commissioner Davis and duly seconded by Commissioner McCook to adjourn. Vote: Motion unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 6 p.m.

Ann W. Kurtzman
Clerk to the Board

J.D. Willis
Chairman