

*Joint Meeting: Scotland County Board of Commissioners/Laurinburg City Council
December 2, 2003, Laurinburg City Chambers*

MINUTES

**Scotland County Board of Commissioners
Joint Session with the Laurinburg City Council, December 2, 2003,
City Council Chamber, 303 W. Church St., Laurinburg, NC**

Commissioners in attendance: Chairman David Burns, Vice Chair Nancy J. Shelley and Commissioners Betty Blue Gholston, Charles “Scoofer” Jordan and Clint Willis.

Commissioners not in attendance: Commissioners Sam Snowdon and J.D. Willis. Staff in attendance: County Manager Scott Sauer and Clerk to the Board Ann W. Kurtzman.

At 6:30 p.m., following a 6 p.m. dinner, Chairman Burns called the recessed meeting to order and Mayor Ann B. Slaughter called the City Council meeting to order.

Mayor Slaughter welcomed the Commissioners and Mark Curfman of MGT of America, the firm contracted by the County to conduct an efficiency assessment and review.

She listed successful projects conducted by the City over the past several years, especially the achievement of being named an All America City for 2003.

Chairman Burns focused on the cooperative relationship between the City and County, which resulted in construction of a sewer line past Hasty and GOJO acquiring the Abbott facility.

An open discussion followed.

Chairman Burns: discussed the MGT of America efficiency study. He said areas where the City and County might improve services through consolidation could result.

Commissioner Clint Willis: discussed good stewardship of taxpayer money. He said it is important to lower the tax rate and improve service to citizens, even if it means making painful decisions.

Councilman Tommy Parker: government doesn't understand the plight of the working people. The City and County must cooperatively figure out ways to service the needs of the taxpayers. He said citizens must be provided incentive to stay in Scotland County and shop locally through attracting more dining and shopping options.

Commissioner Scoofer Jordan: looks forward to the results of the MGT of America assessment results. It is better to look at what the County is doing and how it does its job from an unbiased perspective. He said there are areas that work well and areas that might require improvement. He wants to be able to assure the taxpayer that the County is doing the best job it can.

Commissioner Betty Blue Gholston: is proud of the work of successful projects undertaken by City officials as outlined previously by the Mayor. She said she sees the results everywhere. She is concerned with the high unemployment rate and would like to

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see an increase in training programs to better prepare citizens for jobs in industry and at Scotland Correctional Institution.

Councilwoman Lisa Griswold: discussed highlights of the recent Chamber of Commerce Planning Retreat. She said it was recommended that the Chamber look for ways to attract more retailers to the Town of Wagram. She looks forward to the official presentation by marketing consultants C Group because their efforts and recommendations will work to give the Scotland County area a competitive edge.

City Manager Joe Huffman: the City plans to show its support of local National Guard troops called to service overseas. He said the City would host a holiday banquet for families of the deployed troops December 15.

Councilman Rembert DeBerry: discussed the condition of Lincoln and Washington Parks. Both parks are in need of some attention. There should be facilities in place to attract smaller children because they don't have anywhere else to go, and the new, planned Recreation Complex might be too far away for them.

Vice Chair Nancy Shelley: encouraged a closer working relationship between elected officials and local retailers to satisfy the needs of County citizens and keep local dollars at home. She said there is a need for a centralized communications center in the County and applauded the efforts of the Human Relations Commission, which recently held its coming out reception.

Councilman Curtis Leak: agreed there is a need for improvements at Lincoln and Washington Parks. He said there also is a need to develop a walking access to the County government building and future Recreation Complex from across US 74.

Commissioner Clint Willis: accessing those areas via pedestrian traffic is already in the works as sidewalks in that part of the County are being considered.

Councilman Tommy Parker: called the All America City Award a County award as well, since much of the success in the area is County-driven. He discussed funding non-profits and suggested that they be funded in ways that are not considered a form of double taxation.

Commissioner Scoofer Jordan: it is important to increase revenue and reduce cost. He said the City and County are in this together, and there is a need to be more efficient.

(Commissioner Jordan was excused a left at 7:20 p.m.)

Councilman Tommy Parker: there is a need to promote the City/County as a desirable place to live and as a desirable destination to visit, perhaps using its central location to several major urban areas as a selling point.

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Councilman Curtis Leak: the northwest part of the County, where the two newest schools are located, should be considered the corridor to the future. He said Laurinburg has waited too long when it comes to annexation.

Mayor Ann B. Slaughter: appreciates the cooperative working relationship between the City Manager and the County Manager.

Commissioner Clint Willis: the two governing bodies are elected to lead and will be judged by the results of that leadership. He said any efficiencies and consolidations should be put on the table, considered and acted upon if they are feasible. Then elected officials should put that behind them and go on to other issues.

Commissioner Betty Blue Gholston: suggested studying all law enforcement for the possibility of a combined effort.

City Manager Joe Huffman: receiving the All America Award has been an inspiration. He noted the person most responsible for writing the application is a County resident, not a City resident.

County Manager Scott Sauer: discussed a possible short list of discussion points for the Board of Commissioners' February 20 to 21 Planning Retreat, which include Central School and historic preservations, central communications, annexation, utility planning, sewer extension, annexation, merging planning and zoning, ground water issues.

MGT's Mark Curfman: it is his observation that the City and County work well together in a cooperative effort to dicuss issues. He said he does not always see that kind of relationship between two governing bodies, which makes the area a prime candidate for joint work, possible consolidations and cooperative efforts.

Motion was made Vice Chair Shelley and duly seconded by Commissioner Gholston to adjourn. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

The Laurinburg City Council also adjourned.

Meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann W. Kurtzman
Clerk

David L. Burns
Chairman