

*Scotland County Board of Commissioners January 5, 2004 regular meeting
1405 West Boulevard, Laurinburg*

MINUTES

**Scotland County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting, January 5, 2004
Scotland County Complex, 1405 West Boulevard, Laurinburg, NC**

Prior to the regular meeting the Board of Commissioners attended a dinner and 2003 annual report hosted by DSS. The event began at 5:30 p.m. and was held at Scotland Place on Turnpike Road.

At 7 p.m., Chairman David Burns called the regular meeting to order. Commissioners in attendance: Chairman David Burns, Vice Chair Nancy J. Shelley, Betty Blue Gholston, Charles "Scoofer" Jordan, Sam Snowdon, Clint Willis and J.D. Willis. Staff in attendance: County Manager Scott Sauer, County Attorney Ed Johnston and Clerk to the Board Ann W. Kurtzman. Chairman Burns delivered the opening prayer. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chairman Burns thanked Senator Bill Purcell for attending the DSS dinner/annual report and the regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners.

Public Forum:

Mr. Stuart Shrum, Central School Neighborhood Community Watch: Mr. Shrum said he is interested in preserving Central School for its historical significance in the community. He said that an All America City designation should be about a community's history as well as its present and future. He pledged support from the Central School Neighborhood group in doing whatever is necessary to help keep Central School standing. He said the organization would like to see the building in use by a business or as County offices. He presented the Board of Commissioners with a petition signed by 150 people who would like to see Central School preserved and in use.

Chairman Burns said that a decision concerning the future of Central School is critical, and he would like to see the Board make a determination as to its future during the February 20 to 21 Planning Retreat.

Mr. Mark English, Central School Neighborhood Community Watch: Mr. English described Central School as the diamond of the neighborhood. He said first there was the school and the neighborhood grew up around it. He asked the governing body to consider preserving it.

Item 1. Chamber of Commerce: Marketing Plan and Website

C Group Principals Rick Cauthen and Rob Cornwell discussed the marketing strategy their firm has implemented for the Chamber of Commerce thus far. C Group has designed a 40-page four-color slick magazine, which provides a prospect with all it needs to know about Scotland County. Three front and back information pieces have been

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designed specifically for three industrial targets – automotive, biotech/pharmaceutical and general manufacturing.

A website, separate from the Chamber website, is in the design stage and is geared toward busy CEOs who want to research Scotland County as a site prospect via the Internet. A presentation template, which reflects the design of the website and publications, will be used in PowerPoint when meeting with business prospects.

All of the abovementioned marketing tools are geared for external use.

Internally, a glossy, front and back newsletter will be published quarterly and circulated as inserts in *The Laurinburg Exchange*.

The next step in the marketing plan will involve aggressively recruiting about 100 companies who are considered a good fit for Scotland County. The recruitment effort is expected to begin by early February and will continue over the next two years.

A vision statement developed for the Chamber is as follows: *“Recruit business and industry while maintaining existing industry to increase job growth and capital investment in Scotland County.”*

Item 2. Consent Agenda:

- a) **Approval of minutes of the Board of Commissioners, December 1, 2003 regular meeting and December 2, 2003 joint meeting.**
- b) **Approve contract award for The Wooten Company to provide rehabilitation consultant services for the Scotland Site Housing Program.**
- c) **Approve Letter of Agreement with Robert S. Segal CPA to administer the State Criminal Alien Administration Program (SCAAP) for FY 2002-2003.**
- d) **Approve \$10 registration fee for participation and continuance of walking program offered on a quarterly basis and sponsored by Healthy Carolinians.**
- e) **Approve Resolution of Support for the 8th Congressional District Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy. (Note: A copy of the strategy dated November 10, 2003 is available in the County Manager’s office).**

**Resolution of Support for the 8th Congressional District Comprehensive
Economic Development Strategy**

WHEREAS, the County of Scotland, North Carolina is a member of the 8th Congressional District Comprehensive Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee; and,

WHEREAS, the specific responsibility of the 8th Congressional District CEDS Committee was to prepare CEDS; and

WHEREAS, the CEDS Committee has completed work on and endorsed a CEDS.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Commissioners of Scotland County hereby endorses the 8th Congressional Districts CEDS as a tool to direct economic development efforts which will benefit the entire 8th Congressional District.

Action taken in the County of Scotland, North Carolina, this 5th day of January 2004.

f) Budget Amendments

- 1) **Health Department:** Approve \$500 increase in State funding for Environmental Health.
- 2) **Health Department:** Approve receipt of \$400 in donated funds for Healthy Carolinians.
- 3) **Health Department:** Approve increase of \$5,528 in State funding for Family Planning, which reduces County appropriation by same amount.
- 4) **Health Department:** Approve \$20 fee for Flu Mist (Intranasal Influenza Vaccine). (*Note: Fee approval, not a budget amendment*)
- 5) **Jail:** Approve \$100,000 increase for medical expenses using appropriated fund balance.
- 6) **Jail:** Approve \$82,500 for food and provisions using appropriated fund balance.
- 7) **Jail:** Approve \$30,000 increase for professional services (Segal contract) using appropriated fund balance.
- 8) **DSS:** Approve additional funding in the amount of \$12,192 for Child Daycare. There are no County dollars involved.

Commissioner J.D. Willis asked that *item c. Approve Letter of Agreement with Robert S. Segal CPA to administer the State Criminal Alien Administration Program (SCAAP) for FY 2002-2003* be excluded from the Consent Agenda until the County Manager could provide the Board with more information.

Under Budget Amendments items 5, 6 and 7, the County Manager explained that the Jail was requesting additional funding for medical and food expenses because the inmate population is greater than originally projected.

Commissioner Snowdon said the judicial system must move more quickly so as not to place the burden on the taxpayer.

Chairman Burns asked the County Manager to research possible options with regard to easing the backlog in the judicial system or reducing Jail expense.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Shelley and duly seconded by Commissioner Jordan to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of item c. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Item 3. Lundin & Company LLC FY 2002-2003 Scotland County Audit

Mr. Kevin Patterson, an accountant with Lundin & Company, presented the annual audit for FY 2002-2003. Scotland County this year received an unqualified opinion, which is as good of an opinion as an accountant can give. The County had \$9,466,000 in cash at the end of FY 2003, a decrease in the prior year of \$4.2 million. The largest use of the cash in the past year was for the water project capital outlay at \$4.5 million. Fund Balance in the General Fund ended at \$7.8 million, which was an increase of \$1.3 million over the prior year. The increase was due to the sale of Home Health. General Fund operations increased the Fund Balance by \$26,000. The Enterprise fund balance decreased by \$742,000. This occurred in the solid waste line item largely due to the accrual of funds for the landfill closure.

Mr. Patterson answered specific questions as to where certain expenditures would be located as line items. Mr. Patterson said he would explain the audit more fully by meeting with the Board as a whole or with Commissioners on an individual basis. He said the State and the NC Local Government Commission largely determine the audit model under GASB 34 regulations.

Chairman Burns thanked the County Manager, the Department Heads and every employee who works for the County for the clean audit that came in at \$3,225,000 below what was budgeted. He thanked the employees for realizing that it was a tough year and for saying, "This is a tough year. Where can we save another nickel?"

Item 4. County Engineer's Report

WATER DISTRICT II -- The initial water system is complete and will be turned over to the City of Laurinburg for operation and maintenance. We will continue to add extensions to the system with county staff when available.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT EXPANSION -- The project is in the final construction phase concentrating on finish work such as painting, floor coverings and related work. Work was slowed by the holidays but we expect to be ready for occupancy in February or early March. The completion date has slipped slightly but the project will be completed within budget.

ACCELERATED ACADEMY SEWER -- There has been a considerable amount of work completed on this project in the last month. Approximately eighty percent (80%) of the piping has been installed with the wet well scheduled for delivery this week. The project is going well and under budget.

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RECREATION COMPLEX UPDATE -- We have started the clearing and grubbing of the site for the splash pad. Later this week the site plan will be submitted for review. The bid package for the splash pad is being developed with advertising expected by the first week in February. This project is moving ahead quickly with major contributions for site infrastructure being provided by the City of Laurinburg and Scotland County staff. The recreation complex will realize substantial savings from the cooperative efforts of city and county work forces.

SOLID WASTE -- This past Saturday was “free day” at our recycle centers with another high participation rate of customers. This continues to be one of the better received services provided by the County.

Chairman Burns said the dumping of trash in the County still seems to be a problem. Mr. Blackwell said a number of people still don’t realize that bringing in recyclable material is free any day of the week. Mr. Blackwell said that Solid Waste no longer issues warnings anymore. Mr. Blackwell said if evidence of illegal dumping were found, people who dump solid waste would wind up in the Magistrate’s office.

SOLID WASTE ENFORCEMENT FOR DECEMBER -- Summons Issued, 12; Cases Cleared, 5; Cases Pending in Court, 2.

OTHER ITEMS -- Progress Energy has requested an easement along 2nd Street in Wagram adjoining Murray Park. I have discussed this easement with Ms. (Shannon) Newton (Parks and Recreation) and we recommend granting Progress Energy the easement. The easement would provide power for the new lift station for the Town of Wagram. We are requesting a motion to grant the easement.

Motion was made by Commissioner Gholston and duly seconded by Commissioner J.D. Willis to grant Progress Energy the easement along 2nd Street in Wagram adjoining Murray Park. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Blackwell continued his report: Last week I met with officials from the North Carolina Department of Parole and Probation about office space for Scotland County’s officers. One option discussed was the renovation of the southwest wing of Central School and the North Carolina Department of Parole and Probation entering into a lease agreement with the county. This would locate all parole officers in one building thereby freeing up space in the courthouse while paying for the renovations through the lease. I am preparing a cost estimate for renovation work and a pay back schedule for the lease.

Commissioner J.D. Willis said Parole and Probation could renew its lease at the current location. He said any move toward the use of Central School might commit the County in the future to spend money it doesn’t have. He added that since the Health Department and DSS also require additional space, there should be a master plan and a course of action.

Item 5. Appointments to Boards and Committees

Motion was made by Vice Chair Shelley and duly seconded by Commissioner Jordan to reappoint Rev. Otis McMillan to the Board of Health. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Shelley and duly seconded by Commissioner Gholston to appoint Sam Snowdon as the Scotland County Commissioner designee to the Scotland County Partnership for Children and Families. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Shelley and duly seconded by Commissioner Gholston to reappoint Ms. Mary Carlson and Ms. Bettie McNair to the Scotland County Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Shelley and duly seconded by Commissioner Snowdon to reappoint Mr. Jimmy Bennett to the Scotland County Board of Zoning Adjustment. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Item 6. County Manager's Report

Planning Director Marcus Norton asked the Board of Commissioners to allow Auto Recyclers of North Carolina to secure a bond in order to fulfill its paving requirement. Mr. Norton explained that a standard paving requirement for a site plan is in the Scotland County Zoning Ordinance for a subdivision but not for a business. Mr. Norton added that in order to issue the zoning permit, it is necessary to inform the Board of Commissioners to ensure the paving can be bonded so Auto Recyclers can get up and running. He said the Planning and Zoning Board has recommended the action.

Motion was made by Commissioner Jordan and duly seconded by Vice Chair Shelley to allow Auto Recyclers of North Carolina to secure the bond in order to fulfill its paving requirement. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

County Manager Sauer said that several years ago the Board in the past extended the filing period for business personal property. The Tax Office staff requests that the Board consider a compromise filing date of March 15 for FY 2003-2004.

The Board did not take action on this request.

Commissioner J.D. Willis asked if the County has a contract with Kep Kepley. County Manager Sauer said Mr. Kepley handles administrative items that require a tax assessor's signature, and Mr. Kepley usually comes in nights and weekends. He is on an administrative services contract and is no longer on payroll.

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Chairman Burns said he authorized the County Manager to enter into the administrative services contract with Mr. Kepley for a short period of time during the transition period.

The County Manager said Representative Robin Hayes will be putting together another list of funding opportunities and is soliciting ideas from local officials. Any suggestions for projects or initiatives should be relayed to the County Manager.

In other business, I-73/74 Association, NC, Chairman G.R. Kindley is asking the Board of Commissioners to consider monetary support toward the lobby effort on the federal level for the I-73/74 interstate project.

Motion was made by Commissioner Clint Willis and duly seconded by Commissioner Jordan to approve funding in the amount of \$1,000 for the lobbying efforts of the I-73/74 Association, NC. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Chairman Burns said that any Commissioner with issues he/she would like to get on the Planning Retreat agenda should inform the County Manager as soon as possible. A suggested list of agenda items was distributed.

The NCACC Board will meet January 8, 2004, to discuss top legislative priorities, which include Medicaid Reform, Remote Sales Tax and No Child Left Behind Program.

The NaCO Legislative Conference is scheduled for the end of February/first of March. Anyone interested in attending should contact the Clerk to the Board.

The County Manager updated the Board on the status of abandoned buildings. The Bayfield Store on Fork Street has been taken down. The Old Fence and Window Company in East Laurinburg might be taken down by the next meeting.

Item 7. Other Information

School Funding

Commissioner Clint Willis said he is concerned that 2004 will show little or no revenue income to support the County budget. He said that might cause the governing body to dig deeper into the Fund Balance. He also is concerned that the unemployment rate, now at 11 percent, remains high.

Motion was made by Commissioner Clint Willis and duly seconded by Commissioner Snowdon to invoke the spirit of the County's agreement with the School Board, which says, "In depressed economic times, further negotiations are possible in arriving at an annual appropriation for the schools" and that negotiations be started now to reduce that appropriation by \$1 million effective July 1, 2004, which would enable to the County to lower the tax rate and pass the savings on to the citizens of Scotland County.

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Discussion: Commissioner J.D. Willis said he doesn't have a problem with the motion but the School Board should have had some notification that this motion was going to be made.

Commissioner Jordan suggested that perhaps the motion could be reworded so as not to offend anybody.

Commissioner Gholston said Commissioner Clint Willis should get support of the Board of Commissioners before any negotiations can take place.

Commissioner Clint Willis said the negotiations take time and the Board should not wait until it starts making plans for the next budget.

Vice Chair Shelley said she agreed that negotiation would be in order because the County can't keep digging into its savings account, and it can't keep raising the taxes either.

Commissioner Sam Snowdon said the tax rate in Scotland County is out of line and something must be done to get the tax rate down.

Chairman Burns said he would contact School Board Chairman Buck Carter and the County Manager would contact School Superintendent Shirley Prince to inquire about setting up a joint meeting to discuss the issue.

Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Central School

The Board again discussed the future of Central School. Commissioner Jordan said the County Engineer should develop as many options as possible and bring them to the Retreat so the governing body can make an informed decision at that time.

Joint Land Use Plan

Motion was made by Commissioner Clint Willis and duly seconded by Commissioner Snowdon to require the Scotland County Planning and Zoning Board to adopt the Joint Land Use Plan developed by the Fort Bragg/Pope Air Force Base Land Use Advisory Commission as it pertains to Scotland County, and if there are concerns by the Planning and Zoning Board, it would be required to bring those concerns back to the Board of Commissioners along with a small area plan the Planning and Zoning Board would develop, and propose that the Board of Commissioners adopt and attach it to the Joint Land Use Plan. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Memorandum of Understanding with the Chamber of Commerce

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Commissioner Snowdon said that although the local Chamber of Commerce is moving in the right direction, he feels its scope is narrow. He said he has worked with the County Attorney to develop a Memorandum of Understanding that addresses accountability and reporting and broadens the scope of economic development in a number of areas in the County. He distributed copies and said he would like the governing body to discuss it at the Planning Retreat.

Chairman Burns distributed the current Memorandum of Understanding to use as a basis for comparison.

County Assessment/Efficiency Study Update

Mr. Mark Curfman of MGT of America said a draft assessment/efficiency study should be available by the end of January with a final copy available for the February 20 to 21, 2004 Planning Retreat.

Motion was made Commissioner Jordan and duly seconded by Commissioner Snowdon to adjourn. Vote: Motion unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann W. Kurtzman
Clerk

David L. Burns
Chairman