

MINUTES
Scotland County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting, May 7, 2007
Scotland County Complex, 1405 West Boulevard, Laurinburg NC

At 7 p.m. Chairman J. D. Willis called the regular meeting to order. Commissioners in attendance: Chairman Willis, Vice Chair Betty Blue Gholston and Commissioners John Alford, Leon Butler, Guy McCook, Joyce McDow and Clarence McPhatter (*arrived at 7:10 p.m.*). Staff in attendance: County Manager John A. Crumpton, Finance Officer/Assistant County Manager Kevin Patterson, County Attorney Edward Johnston and Clerk to the Board Ann W. Kurtzman. Commissioner Butler delivered the opening prayer. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Forum

Ms. Brenda Gilbert and **Ms. Jan Schmidt** provided an update on the Storytelling Festival of Carolina. The advertising and marketing plan to promote a successful first-year attendance rate was discussed.

Dr. Robert Drakeford, discussed the expense and the difficulty he has had in the Inspections permitting process. He asked the Commissioners for assistance in the process so he could build his geodesic dome home and RV Park.

Chairman Willis asked the County Manager to get with Inspections to ensure everything is according to code and to move Dr. Drakeford's project forward.

Mr. Bob Davis distributed a letter to the Commissioners on behalf of SCOT (Scotland County of Tomorrow). Mr. Davis said the letter asks the Commissioners to approve a resolution that would state the governing board would have no further negotiations with any waste company that would propose to site a mega landfill in Scotland County.

Item 1. Public Hearing: Community Development Block Grant Program for an Industrial Spec Building

With County Attorney Johnston presiding, the public hearing was called to order to hear comments in favor or against the Community Development Block Grant Program for the development of an industrial spec building.

Chamber of Commerce President Jim Frank Henderson spoke in favor of the block grant. Mr. Henderson said a shell building would attract industry. He discussed the site for the shell building and infrastructure availability. Mr. Henderson said when the shell building sells, funds from the sale would be invested in another shell building.

No one spoke in opposition of the Community Development Block Grant Program, and no one else came forward to speak. Mr. Johnston declared the public hearing closed.

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Motion was made by Commissioner McDow and duly seconded by Commissioner Alford to approve the application for the Community Development Block Grant Program for an Industrial Spec Building as a result of the first public hearing. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Item 2. 2006 Community Child Protection Team Annual Report

CCPT Chair Jane Murray discussed the Team and its goals. Ms. Murray said CCPT reviewed the cases of 11 families, which represented 20 children receiving services, 16 of whom experienced a change in their custodians.

Ms. Murray said contributing factors identified include parenting skills, domestic violence, substance abuse and poverty. She described ways families could receive support in these areas through classes, raising public awareness and making appropriate treatment available. Ms. Murray said poverty is of particular concern and was a contributing factor in 36 percent of families reviewed this year.

Ms. Murray asked the Commissioners to approve the slate of CCPT members for 2007 including Sgt. Darwin Williams as a Laurinburg Police Department representative. Ms. Murray said a recommendation for the Sheriff's Department appointment would be made soon.

Motion was made by Commissioner McPhatter and duly seconded by Commissioner Butler to approve the 2007 Community Child Protection Team slate of members. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Item 3. 2006 Child Fatality Prevention Team Annual Report

Child Fatality Prevention Team Chair Kitty Johnson presented the CFPT annual report. She discussed the cases and explained that most child deaths were caused by congenital anomalies and extreme prematurity. She said pre-natal care is available to everyone regardless of financial means. She added that transportation is occasionally a problem. Ms. Johnson explained that in spite of the best pre-natal care, the outcomes are not always good.

Item 4. Sports Complex Lights and Financing Bid Information

County Engineer Jim Blackwell said after evaluation the bids for lighting at the Sports Complex, it is recommended that the bid be awarded to E.F. Belk and Son, Inc. for \$335,862 base bid with the ability to accept the alternate bids to the design, which could potentially reduce the project cost by \$109,000. Mr. Blackwell discussed some of the alternate bids, which might lower the cost.

Commissioner McPhatter asked about the second lowest bid from local company McCarter Electric. Mr. Blackwell said the law does not allow awarding a contract to a local company if it did not submit the lowest bid.

Motion was made by Commissioner Alford and duly seconded by Vice Chair Gholston to award the bid for the Sports Complex to E.F. Belk and Son, Inc. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Finance Officer/Assistant County Manager Kevin Patterson said an informal RFP on financing the Sports Complex lighting was conducted. He said the lowest financing packages were offered by Sun

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Trust Leasing at 3.84 percent and BB&T at 3.9 percent. Mr. Patterson said the County currently has a banking relationship with BB&T. County Attorney Edward Johnston said a resolution would be required authorizing the financing agreement.

Motion was made by Commissioner McPhatter and duly seconded by Commissioner Butler that would authorize a financing agreement between the County and BB&T for construction of the Sports Complex lights. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Item 5. Consent Agenda:

- a) **Approval of minutes of the Board of Commissioners, April 2, 2007 regular meeting.**
- b) **Approve the following 2008 holiday schedule, which will be observed by the State: January 1, New Year's Day; January 21, Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday; March 21, Good Friday; May 26, Memorial Day; July 4, Independence Day; September 1, Labor Day; November 11, Veteran's Day; November 27 and 28, Thanksgiving; and December 24, 25 and 26, Christmas.**
- c) **Approve citizen petition request to include Lee Lane as part of the State-maintained road system.**
- d) **Approve request by the City of Laurinburg to hold a public exhibition July 4 with use a pyrotechnics pursuant to NCGS 14-413.**
- e) **Approve EMS Week Proclamation**
- f) **Approve Tax Department request to release of funds for the month of April in the amount of \$367.29 and in the amount of \$8,838.17 of property taxes and approve refunds in the amount of \$298.92 and in the amount of \$3,129.08.**
- g) **Approve resolution that provides additional funds for fire departments as well as their eligibility for statewide grants.**

A Resolution in Support of House Bill 262 and Senate Bill 238, Legislation That Provides Necessary, Additional Funds for and Improves Eligibility of Fire Departments for Statewide Grants

WHEREAS, the Commissioner of Insurance of North Carolina is also the State Fire Marshal;

WHEREAS, as Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshal he and the North Carolina Department of Insurance administer the volunteer fire department grant funds and firemen's relief funds;

WHEREAS, fire departments in every county have counted on these annual fire grants for many years to purchase necessary equipment and supplies up to \$20,000 (with an additional match of \$20,000);

WHEREAS, there are approximately 1,400 volunteer fire departments in the State, a number which translates each year into greater grant requests than the current grant formula is able to bear;

WHEREAS, the current grant formula is also inadequate in that more and more volunteer fire departments are becoming ineligible due to the current caps on population in the respective fire districts, the number of employees in a fire department, and the overall grant cap of \$20,000 annually has not kept up with inflation;

WHEREAS, adjusting the formula and statutes for these grant funds would ensure that more departments are eligible and, furthermore, that they are eligible for larger matching grants, facts which will translate into better ratings for those fire departments and lower homeowners' insurance premiums for homes within the respective fire districts;

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WHEREAS, these changes can be accomplished without raising taxes on insurance companies or citizens;

WHEREAS, legislators this year filed House Bill 262 and Senate Bill 238 upon request of the Commissioner of Insurance and the recommendation of the Revenue Laws Committee of the North Carolina General Assembly, legislation that is necessary for the proper administration of these grant funds and for the vitally needed improvements above; and,

WHEREAS, the Department of Insurance and the Office of State Fire Marshal estimate that more than 200 additional fire departments may become eligible for fire grants by this legislation alone.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Scotland County Board of Commissioners expresses its strong support for House Bill 262 and Senate Bill 238 and respectfully requests and fervently encourages that its legislative delegation do all in its might to attain passage of either or both bills during the 2007 session of the North Carolina General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Scotland County Board of Commissioners, because of pending deadlines for legislative action this session, will hereby notify its legislative delegation in the State House and State Senate by fax, email or hand delivery, whichever method provides the most prompt communication of this resolution.

This the 7th day of May, 2007.

h) Approve Interlocal Agreement with the LRCOG, which would assist the agency in securing financing for a new office.

i) Budget Amendments:

- 1) DSS: Approve receipt of \$7,610 in additional funding, and authorize the Finance Officer to make the necessary arrangements to receive and expend the money. No County dollars involved.**

The Board of Commissioners by consensus agreed to remove item h. from the Consent Agenda pending further review.

Motion was made by Commissioner McDow and duly seconded by Commissioner Alford to approve the Consent Agenda with the exception of item h., which was removed from the Consent Agenda. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

County Manager Crumpton explained the interlocal agreement among the LRCOG counties would be a commitment on a 25-year loan so the COG could build office space on property it now owns. Mr. Crumpton said the interlocal agreement would put the COG on better financial ground by owning real estate. Mr. Crumpton added that the COG currently pays \$12,000 a month to lease offices.

Vice Chair Gholston said she was concerned about putting the County into long-term indebtedness, especially if it might not be necessary. Mr. Crumpton said the bank wants a guarantee from counties because they have revenue generating authority.

County Attorney Johnston said there is nothing in the agreement that states the Lumber River Development Corporation would convey the property to the COG.

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Vice Chair Gholston suggested that LRCOG Executive Director James Perry explain the interlocal agreement more fully before the governing board makes a decision.

Motion was made by Commissioner Butler and duly seconded by Commissioner Alford to table the interlocal agreement until the next meeting of the Board of Commissioners. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Item 6. Update from the Finance Officer/Assistant County Manager

Finance Officer/Assistant County Manager Patterson asked the Commissioners to consider a release of funds in the amount of \$1,962.52 and a refund in the amount of \$1,529.75.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Gholston and duly seconded by Commissioner McPhatter to approve the release of funds in the amount of \$1,962.52 and a refund in the amount of \$1,529.75. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Patterson gave a brief financial projection of an expected \$35 million in expenditures and \$36 million in revenues. The end of year Fund Balance would be estimated at \$7.5 million.

Item 7. Appointments to Boards and Committees

Motion was made by Commissioner Butler and duly seconded by Vice Chair Gholston to appoint Ms. Aretha Ratliff as the hospital representative to the Aging Advisory Council. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Commissioner Butler and duly seconded by Vice Chair Gholston to appoint Joyce McDow as the Commissioner-representative to the Richmond Community College Board of Trustees to serve out a term that will expire June 30, 2008. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Item 8. County Manager's Report

County Manager Crumpton said Central School was officially deeded to the Housing Authority.

Mr. Crumpton asked the Board if it would like to participate in the Beaver Management Program for FY 2007-2008 for \$4,000. Mr. Crumpton noted the County has not participated in the Program since 2002.

The Board of Commissioners by consensus agreed not to participate in the Beaver Management Program for FY 2007-2008.

County Manager Crumpton said Stewartsville Volunteer Fire Department asked the County to pay \$2,496 for an emergency expenditure on one of their trucks. Previous requests similar to this have not been approved, according to Mr. Crumpton, although the County helped fire departments with these expenditures prior to the enactment of the Fire District Tax and the purchase of new fire trucks. The purpose of the tax was to pay operational costs associated with running the vehicles. Mr. Crumpton said payment on this request might cause other volunteer fire departments to make similar requests.

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The Board of Commissioners by consensus agreed not to pay for the emergency expenditure and directed the County Manager to write a letter to the Stewartville Volunteer Fire Department stating the Board's position on the issue.

County Manager Crumpton said the Sheriff's Department asked for the EMS Suburban, which was surplus, and Parks and Recreation requested a Transportation van that is no longer in use for senior program day trips.

The Commissioners discussed the Suburban and the likelihood of maintenance costs if its use was continued.

Chairman Willis suggested that the County Manager sell the Suburban as surplus and transfer the Transportation van to Parks and Recreation.

County Manager Crumpton asked if there would be a free trash day this year. Mr. Crumpton said the solid waste fund has an operational deficit, and \$20,000 would have to be transferred from Fund Balance to hold free trash day.

Chairman Willis suggested that staff plan for free trash day in the FY 2007-2008 budget.

Mr. Crumpton reminded the Commissioners that Department of Commerce representatives will discuss training and work force development May 11 at the Belk Center on the St. Andrews campus.

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Butler asked the Commissioners to consider rescheduling the July 2, 2007 meeting to July 9, 2007.

Motion was made by Commissioner McCook and duly seconded by Commissioner Butler to reschedule the regular meeting in July from July 2, 2007 to July 9, 2007. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Motion was made by Commissioner McPhatter and duly seconded by Commissioner McCook to recess until 4 p.m. Thursday, May 24, 507 West Covington Street. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann W. Kurtzman
Clerk to the Board

J.D. Willis
Chairman