

MINUTES
Scotland County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting, September 2, 2008
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 and Joyce McDow. Commissioners not in attendance: Clarence McPhatter. Staff in attendance: County Manager Kevin Patterson, County Attorney Edward Johnston and Clerk to the Board Ann W. Kurtzman. Chairman Willis delivered the opening prayer. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Public Forum

Mr. Gilbert Abraham, Scotland Warriors Achieving Triumph (SWAT): Mr. Abraham asked the Commissioners to consider approving use of Laurel Hill or Gibson gyms by the community basketball team for youth ages 13 to 17. Mr. Abraham said last year SWAT received up to \$2,000 worth of hours at the facilities.

Motion was made by Commissioner Alford and duly seconded by Vice Chair Gholston to waive the fee up to \$2,000 for use of Laurel Hill and Gibson gymnasiums by SWAT. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Commissioner McCook asked if the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board should look at this as far as scheduling. Chairman Willis said that the Commissioners are taking action only on the waiving of the fee and that scheduling should be reviewed by the Advisory Board.

Mr. Tom Walters, 819 Aberdeen Road: Mr. Walters said \$99.01 was deducted from his State refund check to pay vehicle tax on a car he didn't own but on one his son owned. Mr. Walters said after speaking with the Tax Supervisor and the County Manager about the error, he received a check for \$94.96. Mr. Walters said he would like a full refund plus interest.

Chairman Willis directed the County Manager and the Tax Administrator to look into this, and if the deduction was not a legitimate one, to reimburse Mr. Walters.

Commissioner McDow formally introduced Library Director Leon Gyles to the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner McDow said there would be a drop-in to meet Mr. Gyles 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. September 24 at the Library.

Cooperative Extension Director Cathy Graham distributed tokens of appreciation to the Commissioners for their continued support on behalf of NC AT & T and NC State.

Commissioner McDow, on behalf of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, presented Chairman Willis with a framed certificate recognizing him for reaching a longevity milestone for 20 years of service as an elected official.

Item 1. Public Hearing: Planning and Zoning

Planning and Zoning Board Chairman Henry McLeod presented the following rezoning application:

Rezoning Application Number 447-08 – Theresa McCabe Alexander – Request to rezone 5.2 acres of a 69.71-acre tract in accordance with the Scotland County Zoning Ordinance, Article IV from OS (Open Space) to RA (Residential Agriculture). The property is located on SR1332 (Slate Rd) and is better described as Scotland County Tax Map Number 436, Block 01, Parcel Number 015.

Mr. McLeod said the Planning and Zoning Board recommends the application be approved.

Chairman Willis called the Public Hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak against or in favor of Rezoning Application 447-08. No one came forward, and the Public Hearing was closed.

Motion was made by Commissioner Butler and duly seconded by Commissioner Alford to approve Rezoning Application Number 447-08. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Planning and Zoning Board Chairman Henry McLeod presented the following rezoning application:

Rezoning Application Number 448-08 – Lighthouse International Outreach Ministries, Inc. – Request to rezone 4.1 acres in accordance with the Scotland County Zoning Ordinance, Article IV from I1 (Light Industrial) to HC (Highway Commercial). The property is located on Leisure Road and is better described as Scotland County Tax Map Number 196, Block 01, Parcel Number 067.

Mr. McLeod said the Planning and Zoning Board recommends the application be approved.

Chairman Willis called the Public Hearing and asked if anyone wished to speak against or in favor of Rezoning Application 448-08. No one came forward, and the Public Hearing was closed.

Commissioner McCook said he would abstain from voting on the application because of a possible conflict of interest.

Motion was made by Commissioner Alford and duly seconded by Vice Chair Gholston to approve Rezoning Application Number 448-08. Vote: In Favor: Chairman Willis, Vice Chair Gholston and Commissioners Alford, Butler and McDow. Abstain: Commissioner McCook. Motion approved.

Item 2. Work First Biennial County

DSS Director Joe Knott said that the Work First Biennial FY 2009-2011 program requires the Commissioners to choose whether Scotland County would be an Electing county or a Standard county. Mr. Knott said Scotland County since 1995 has been a Standard county.

Motion was made by Commissioner Alford and duly seconded by Commissioner Butler to approve Scotland County as a Standard county as part of the Work First Biennial FY 2009-2011 program. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

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Mr. Knott distributed a list of individuals who wish to participate on the Work First Planning Committee. He said that Mr. John Alford is included on the list as the Commissioner-representative.

Motion was made by Commissioner McDow and duly seconded by Commissioner McCook to approve the Work First Planning Committee for FY 2009-2011, which includes Mr. John Alford as the Commissioner-representative. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Knott said he will come before the Commissioners at the October 6 meeting to present the Work First Biennial Plan.

Vice Chair Gholston praised the Work First staff for their assistance and support in bringing people to the seminar regarding employment at Scotland Correctional Institution.

Item 3. Office of the Sheriff: Request for East Laurinburg School Resource Officer

Sheriff Shep Jones asked the Commissioners to approve the contract between the Office of the Sheriff and Scotland County Schools to hire a Resource Officer at East Laurinburg Alternative School. Sheriff Jones said there would be no cost to the County, and the School system would pay for the salary and benefits for the position.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Gholston and duly seconded by Commissioner Alford to approve the contract between the Office of the Sheriff and Scotland County Schools for the hiring of a Resource Officer at East Laurinburg Alternative School. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Chairman Willis then provided an update on the County's plan for the Jail to come into compliance with the State. Chairman Willis said that although the State recommended the County hire seven additional detention officers, the County proposes to hire five detention officers – four new positions and one position that would transition from that of a resource officer to a detention officer. The new positions would cost approximately \$130,000. Chairman Willis said the alternative could mean closure of the Jail and housing of the inmates elsewhere at an estimated cost of \$3.4 million.

Commissioner Alford asked if it would be feasible to phase in the new positions rather than hire them all at once. Sheriff Shep Jones explained that staffing logistics and responsibilities of each member of the detention officer team during each shift would not lend itself to a phase-in of staffing. Sheriff Jones added that since the Jail has been out of compliance for a long time, the State wants a plan that it would consider feasible.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Gholston and duly seconded by Commissioner McDow to approve the hiring of four additional detention officers at the Jail and to transition an existing resource officer position to a detention officer. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Item 4. Consent Agenda:

- a) Approval of minutes of the Board of Commissioners August 4, 2008 regular meeting.
- b) Approve Tax Department request to release funds in the amount of \$62.59 and in the amount of \$2,216.80 and to make refunds in the amount of \$428.02 and in the amount of \$1253.71.

- c) Approve proposed dates for the 2009 Board of Commissioners meeting schedule as follows: January 5, February 2, March 2, April 6, May 4, June 1, July 6, August 3, September 1 (Tuesday), October 5, November 2, December 7.
- d) Approve Health Department request to increase laboratory fees to cover increased costs incurred from LabCorp.
- e) Approve Health Department request to convert the pregnancy test fee from a flat rate to a sliding fee scale.
- f) Approve Health Department request to charge \$34 for the flu vaccine, \$15 of which would be for the vaccine and \$19 of which would be for the administration fee.
- g) Budget Amendments:
 - 1) **Sheriff:** Approve receipt of \$500 from Southeastern Regional Mental Health and authorize the Finance Officer to make the necessary arrangements to receive and expend the money. No County dollars involved.
 - 2) **Soil and Water:** Approve transfer of \$500 from the 2007-2008 Soil and Water budget to the 2008-2009 Soil and Water budget for the Voluntary Ag District Program.
 - 3) **Parks and Recreation:** Approve receipt of \$45,000 in grant funds from the NC DOT for the bike map and authorize the Finance Officer to make the necessary arrangements to receive and expend the money. No County dollars involved.
 - 4) **DSS:** Approve line item transfers in the amount of \$2,080, \$8,612 and \$6,000 since funding was received differently than projected. No County dollars involved.
 - 5) **Health:** Approve receipt of \$45,652 in additional State revenue for FY 2008-2009 and authorize the Finance Officer to make the necessary arrangements to receive and expend the money.

Item 5. Legion Park Recommendations

Parks and Recreation Director Shannon Newton distributed a summary of activities in which Legion Parks is used and a list of groups that do use it.

Ms. Newton said the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board recommends the following for consideration by the Board of Commissioners:

That the County Commissioners and County staff and American Legion Post 50 renegotiate the lease with a term for the lease a minimum of 15 years.

That the County Commissioners request a mobile classroom from the Board of Education for placement in Legion Park so the unit could be converted to restrooms, changing areas and utility room with a washer and dryer.

That the County repair and paint all entrance gates to Legion Park.

That the County encourages Scotland County Schools to incur the cost of replacing right and left field fencing from dugouts to outfield fence so it is at high school standards.

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Commissioner Alford asked whether the current bathrooms with upgrades would be better than using a mobile unit.

County Engineer/Facilities Manager Jim Blackwell said the mobile unit is much larger and would provide more space, especially for storage and in the accommodation of changing rooms for men and women. Mr. Blackwell said the unit is sturdy since it is built to meet State standards for a modular facility.

Vice Chair Gholston said she would like to know what this would cost the County and the School system and what financial obligation the Legion Post would have. Chairman Willis agreed and said he would like to have a better understanding of the County's responsibility before it enters into a 15-year lease.

Ms. Newton and County Manager Patterson said that the lease also would include the Veterans Service Office and the Tennis Center.

Chairman Willis asked County staff to present the information again with the total price of the project and what would be the financial responsibility of Scotland County Schools, the City of Laurinburg and the Legion.

Item 6. Update from the County Manager

County Manager Patterson said the LGC indicated the County could go forward in its plan to refinance the first school bond with BB&T. Mr. Patterson said Poyner & Spruill would be retained as counsel in the refinancing of the bond. The conversion would occur some time in November.

County Manager Patterson said Richmond Community College requests the County waive building fees for its Scotland Campus. Mr. Patterson said building fees in the past have been waived for Scotland County Schools and the City of Laurinburg providing they do not use contractors. Mr. Patterson said RCC intends to use contractors, and the fee could be upward of \$10,000.

Commissioner Butler said the County should be consistent when it comes to waiving fees, and they should not be waived if an outside contractor is used.

County Manager Patterson said households in Water Districts I and II who paid a fee to tap onto the water system also agreed to pay a monthly fee until they connected to the water system. Mr. Patterson said a number of people, particularly in Water District I, never paid the monthly fee and are in breach of contract.

Chairman Willis suggested that perhaps the County write off the bad debt and when those people choose to connect to the water system they be charged the back fees in order to connect.

The Commissioners discussed the issue of fairness since there are people who pay the monthly fee and still are not connected to the water system.

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Chairman Willis directed the County Manager and the County Attorney to study the options regarding the Water District fees and develop the most cost effective plan and resolution. He asked that the plan be presented to the Commissioners at the October meeting.

County Manager Patterson asked for a budget amendment to transfer \$53,000 from IT to the Courthouse budget. The funds would be used to install a security system. Mr. Patterson explained that if the system is funded through the Courthouse, security tapes of a sensitive nature would not be considered public documents.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Gholston and duly seconded by Commissioner Alford to approve the transfer of \$53,000 from the IT Department budget to the Courthouse budget. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Patterson said that County Engineer/Facilities Manager Jim Blackwell determined that an expansion to the Scotland Community Health Clinic would not interfere with County function or infrastructure.

Motion was made by Commissioner McCook and duly seconded by Commissioner McDow to approve the expansion of the Scotland Community Health Clinic. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Patterson reintroduced a request for funding by Hospice of Scotland County for \$16,340. Mr. Patterson explained that the funding represents a 10 percent match to a grant that allows Hospice to provide in-home aide to the elderly.

Motion was made by Commissioner Butler to approve funding for Hospice of Scotland County in the amount of \$16,340.

Vice Chair Gholston asked whether the Commissioners should fund Hospice from their Community Assistance grants rather than take money from the General Fund.

The motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Patterson said that despite the 10 percent match, Hospice anticipates a loss in unreimbursed services.

Vice Chair Gholston said the program provides limited services for the elderly who would not receive any in-home aide service.

Motion was made by Vice Chair Gholston and duly seconded by Commissioner Alford to approve the Hospice of Scotland County funding in the amount of \$16,340 for FY 2008-2009 and that each Commissioners consider funding Hospice at \$1,000 through Community Assistance Program grants to offset the cost to the General Fund. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Mr. Patterson said elected officials and community leaders are invited to a September 9 Sustainable Sandhills meeting. The location has not yet been announced.

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Mr. Patterson said he would attend a BRAC relocation Fair in Atlanta September 9 to 12 and a fly-in to Washington, D.C., September 14 and 15.

Item 7. Appointments to Boards and Committees

Commissioner Butler said it is requested that Commissioner John Alford, County Manager Kevin Patterson, LRCOG Housing Coordinator Adrian Lowery, Ms. Susan Covington and Rev. Terrence Williams be appointed to the Community Development Block Grant Advisory Committee.

The Board of Commissioners by consensus agreed to table this item until the previous Board members could be notified to see if they wish to continue to serve.

Comments from Commissioners

Vice Chair Gholston said the seminar to assist Scotland County residents in securing employment at Scotland Correctional Institution was a success. Vice Chair Gholston said she and ESC Director Burnest Graham recently met with Scotland Correctional Institution Director Fredrick Hubbard to discuss options for hiring more Scotland County residents.

Closed Session

Motion was made by Commissioner Alford and duly seconded by Commissioner McDow to go into Closed Session held in accordance with N.C. General Statute §143-318.11(a)(4) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of business in the area served by this body. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

OPEN SESSION RESUMED

Chairman Willis reminded the Commissioners of the September 4, 2008 groundbreaking for the Wagram Community Center.

The Commissioners in general discussed funding of the fire departments and the need for the Commissioners to review the financial reports. The Commissioners also discussed the need for criminal background checks.

Motion was made by Commissioner Alford and duly seconded by Commissioner Butler to recess to 6 p.m. Thursday, September 18, 2008 at the entrance to the Recreation Complex, Turnpike Road. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.

Ann W. Kurtzman
Clerk to the Board

J.D. Willis
Chairman