

*Scotland County Board of Commissioners Midyear Planning Retreat
February 20, 2004, Scotland County Annex, 231 E. Cronly Street*

MINUTES

**Scotland County Board of Commissioners Midyear Planning Retreat,
February 20, 2004, Scotland County Annex, 231 E. Cronly St., Laurinburg, NC**

At 1 p.m., Chairman David Burns called the previously recessed 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 Attorney Ed Johnston, County Engineer Jim Blackwell, Finance Officer Charles Williams, Finance Assistant Anne Tindall, Tax Collector Rhonda Saffel and Clerk to the Board Ann W. Kurtzman.

MGT of America – PowerPoint Presentation and General Discussion

Consultant Mark Curfman, MGT of America, presented a **draft report and recommendations** of the Scotland County government assessment/efficiency study via PowerPoint.

Mr. Curfman said the need for space both personal and for storage, a method to implement imaging and document management and the creation of an information technology services department were among the recommendations. He said that effective imaging and document management would reduce the amount of paper storage and free space for other uses.

Mr. Curfman recommended two options for staffing organization. One option would create five teams or “super departments” – administrative, development, community, engineering and emergency – where the designated team leader would report directly to the County Manager.

The second recommended organizational option calls for the creation of a Deputy County Manager position to handle the operations and day-to-day issues freeing the County Manager to focus on policy issues and the direction of the organization.

Mr. Curfman then reviewed the recommendations for each of the departments.

(break at 2:20 p.m.; meeting resumed at 2:35 p.m.)

Midyear Review and Budget Planning

Commissioner Clint Willis, Chairman of the Finance Committee, said that sales tax revenue is down this year compared to the same time last year and ad valorem tax collection also is down this year compared to the same time last year. Commissioner Clint Willis said that those two figures, coupled with the \$1million Fund Balance used in the FY 2003-2004 budget would put the County that much in arrears as it plans its FY 2004-2005 budget.

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He said that by department the County has only used 40% in expenditures of what was budgeted as of December 31, 2003.

Finance Officer Charles Williams said the County has yet to be billed for property and liability insurance. He said the bill arrives in June, and it is expected to be high. Mr. Williams said that over all, Department Heads are being frugal with their budgets.

Commissioner Clint Willis said that although an upgrade in technology would be painful and costly, he has asked Department Heads to report to him on their computer needs. Commissioner Gholston suggested the possibility of leasing computers as a possible cost saving solution.

Before addressing the Central School issue, Commissioner Sam Snowdon distributed a list of 14 goals for the County. They are as follows:

1. *Evaluate and implement the MGT report where applicable.*
2. *Employ a County Manager (by June 1, 2004 or sooner) – primary responsibilities are to carry out policies of the entire Board of Commissioners.*
3. *Employ a County Finance Officer (by June 1, 2004 or sooner).*
4. *Employ a County Tax Assessor (by June 1, 2004 or sooner).*
5. *Employ a County Tax Appraiser (by June 1, 2004 or sooner).*
6. *Employ a County Information Specialist (by June 1, 2004 or sooner).*
7. *Reduce County taxes by 10 to 15% over the next three to five years.*
 - *Increase tax collections to 98 or 99%.*
 - *Employ fulltime County Attorney if necessary to collect taxes.*
 - *Increase tax base by \$1,000,000,000 (one billion over the next three to five years)*
 - *Continue to press for a vote by citizens on the school floor.*
8. *Pay employees according to their performance. (We have some outstanding employees. Provide adequate working conditions to carry out the employees' jobs).*
9. *Sell all surplus County property and renovate Central School.*
10. *Inventory all vacant and empty buildings and work to get them occupied.*
11. *Scotland County to develop a strategy for the future.*
12. *Implement the Public Relations policy already adopted by the Board of Commissioners.*
13. *Citizen friendly staff who educate the public on County policies, rules and regulations.*
14. *Improve relationship with the Board of education if they are willing.*

Future of Central School and proposed Probation contract

County Engineer Jim Blackwell provided the following report:

Overview:

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Central School is approximately 16,900 square foot gross floor area on 3.1 acres of land. The building was constructed originally in 1909 with additions in 1938, 1949 and 1951. The building is in excellent structural condition throughout. The mechanical systems are outdated and inefficient. The electrical wiring is in good condition but will require additional rework if renovation into office space is decided. All rooms have high ceilings, which will accommodate the installation of duct work, wiring and light fixtures with a suspended grid ceiling. The existing roofing system may need replacement in certain areas within ten years. There are no leaks in any classroom areas.

North Carolina Department of Probation and Parole Proposal

North Carolina Department of Probation and Parole is interested in relocating all of their offices to the 1949 addition of the school. There have been three visits to Central School by local, district and State officers to evaluate the building and location. All probation officials have been very supportive of a plan for the County to renovate this section of the school and rent it to the State under a long-term contract. I have received estimates from local contractors on the cost to renovate the 7,000 square foot section into offices, which would be ADA compliant.

The estimate is \$50.00/ square foot plus \$45,000 for an elevator.

Capital Cost at \$50.00/ square foot	\$ 350,000
Elevator	\$ 45,000
Total	\$ 395,000
Operating Costs	\$ 800 per month
Rent	\$ 3,200 per month
Net	\$ 2,400

Advantages for Probation

Consolidated all officers into one building

Advantages for County

Opens office space in courthouse (10 offices)

Reduces traffic in courthouse

More parking spaces at courthouse

Receive rent from office space

Disadvantages

Capital Costs

Operating/Maintenance Costs

Estimate from school system \$200,000 for demolition of Central School's entire structure.

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Commissioner J.D. Willis said that it would take a dozen years to see a return on investment if the County entered in to a contract with the Probation Office. He said economically the timing is not good, and he would rather see the County construct a new facility rather than do anything to renovate Central School.

Motion was made by Commissioner J.D. Willis and duly seconded by Vice Chair Shelley to offer Central School to the Central School Neighborhood Revitalization Committee (CSNRC) for the price of \$1 and to provide the CSNRC with specific dates and guidelines to be established by the Board of Commissioners, and if said dates and guidelines are not met, Central School would be returned to Scotland County where its future would be determined by the Scotland County Board of Commissioners. Vote: For: Chairman Burns, Vice Chair Shelley and Commissioners Gholston, Jordan, Clint Willis and J.D. Willis. Vote: Against: Commissioner Snowdon.

The Board of Commissioners directed the County Attorney to research any legal problems should Central School be placed on the National Historic Register.

Other Business

Chairman Burns said two bids have been submitted to provide vending machine service to the County. He asked if the Board would like to act on awarding a vending contract at its March 8, 2004 regular meeting.

Consensus of the Board is to authorize the administrative staff to seek submission of a third bid and to award the vending machine contract to the lowest bidder.

Commissioner J. D. Willis directed the County Engineer to notify North Carolina Department of Probation and Parole of the Board's decision with regard to Central School.

Commissioner Clint Willis said the Board should begin developing a Master Plan to address the County's space issues and to assign a time frame with which to carry out the plan.

Motion was made by Commissioner Snowdon and duly seconded by Vice Chair Shelley to adjourn. Vote: Motion unanimously approved. Meeting adjourned at 3:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ann W. Kurtzman
Clerk

David L. Burns
Chairman