

*Scotland County Board of Commissioners/Laurinburg City Council Joint Session
July 8, 2015, Small Business Innovation Center, Laurinburg, NC*

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Scotland County Commissioners in attendance: Chairman Guy McCook, Vice Chair Carol McCall and Commissioners Bob Davis, Betty Blue Gholston and Whit Gibson. Commissioners not in attendance: Commissioners John Alford and Clarence McPhatter. Staff in attendance: County Manager Kevin Patterson, County Attorney Ed Johnston and Research Analyst/Safety Coordinator Lori Parks (recording the minutes).

City Council in attendance: Mayor Tommy Parker and Council Members Curtis Leak, J.D. Willis, Drew Williamson, Mary Jo Adams and Dee Hammond. City staff in attendance: City Manager Charles Nichols and City Clerk Jenny Tippett.

At 5:30 p.m., Chairman McCook called the County meeting to order. Mayor Tommy Parker called the City Council meeting to order. The City Council approved its agenda.

Mayor Parker said the City requested the joint meeting because it was concerned about the direction of the Scotland County Economic Development Corporation (SCEDC) following the departure of former Economic Development Director Greg Icard.

Mayor Parker said the City Council believes the SCEDC hasn't properly disseminated information to the Council, and the City is concerned about its role in the SCEDC. Council Member Willis asked whether the SCEDC bylaws are being followed.

City Council Member Willis questioned the role of the County and the County Manager in the SCEDC and whether those roles were changed since the SCEDC was first established.

Chairman McCook said there have been no changes, and the SCEDC continues to do what it has always done. Chairman McCook described the SCEDC as a partnership although the County has more authority. Chairman McCook said the Economic Development Director position was established as a County employee who reports to the County Manager.

Council Member Williamson suggested the City could be more proactive in the SCEDDC in order to benefit the City. Mayor Parker suggested the City also conduct its own marketing effort as well as becoming more active in the SCEDC.

Chairman McCook said if the bylaws don't fully address all the issues then perhaps a Memorandum of Understanding could be developed as a supplement to the bylaws. Mayor Parker suggested the City Council review the bylaws and make suggestions.

Chairman McCook reviewed the hiring process for the Economic Development Director and provided an update on the search for a candidate. Vice Chair McCall said to date the City Manager has been part of the search process. Mr. Patterson displayed the job description for the Economic Development Director.

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Chairman McCook said there is a need for better communication and a better understanding of expectations. He suggested that an annual SCEDC meeting be held jointly between the Commissioners and City Council.

Chairman McCook updated those in attendance on the former water/wastewater treatment plant at WestPoint Stevens, which Cascades will transfer to the County, and on the option to purchase a 50-acre tract of land by the airport as a possible industrial site. Chairman McCook said the State not the SCEDC was involved with the Blue Scope project announcement although the County will be involved in the incentives.

Council Member Williamson suggested involving other parties in the SCEDC like successful business people in the community. Commissioner Gholston said the bylaws first should be reviewed before involving others. Chairman McCook said it is important to get an SCEDC President (Economic Development Director) in place first.

Chairman McCook said the SCEDC will schedule a meeting and invite potential stakeholders for input and to discuss the direction of economic development activities in the community.

Chairman McCook said a reason there is not an Economic Development Director currently in place is because the salary is in the \$65,000 range when it would be more competitive at \$100,000. Vice Chair McCall suggested interested stakeholders could contribute toward a higher salary.

In the meantime, Chairman McCook said City Council will be sent copies of the SCEDC budget, the bylaws and strategic plan.

The County Commissioners moved to adjourn at 6:45 p.m. The City Council also adjourned.

Minutes composed from notes compiled by Ms. Lori Parks.

Ann W. Kurtzman
Clerk to the Board

Guy McCook
Chairman