

FEBRUARY 8, 2008

MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

NORTH CAROLINA  
MECKLENBURG COUNTY

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Special Session at the Mahlon Adams Pavilion in Freedom Park located at 2435 Cumberland Avenue, Charlotte, N.C. at 8:00 a.m. on Friday, February 8, 2008.

ATTENDANCE

**Present:** Chairman Jennifer Roberts and Commissioners  
Karen Bentley, J. Daniel Bishop, Dumont Clarke  
H. Parks Helms, Bill James, Norman A. Mitchell, Sr.  
Dan Ramirez and Valerie C. Woodard  
County Manager Harry L. Jones, Sr.  
Clerk to the Board Janice S. Paige

**Absent:** None

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*Commissioner Woodard was absent when the meeting was called to order and until noted in the minutes.*

*The meeting was called to order by Chairman Roberts.*

County Manager Jones provided an overview of the agenda and the goals and expectations for the conference. Topics for discussion: Strategic Plan Updates, Updated FY2008 Revenue Projections, Transitioning from Planning to Budgeting, and Other Items of Interest: Revaluation Process, Requirements of the Redistricting Process, Federal Legislative Agenda, and Budget/Public Policy Workshop Dates.

**Strategic Plan Updates**

Director of Planning and Evaluation Leslie Johnson gave an update on the Strategic Plan and reviewed proposed Scorecard Revisions for Focus Areas of: Community Health & Safety, Effective & Efficient Government.

Comments

**Community Health & Safety**

Commissioner Mitchell asked for an explanation of the new measure, Disabled Adult Abuse & Neglect Rate, versus the previous Measure, Elder Abuse Rate, which was addressed. *It was noted that state data doesn't breakout by senior or elderly.*

Chairman Roberts asked about the neglect rate, which was explained.

Chairman Roberts asked how many disabled adults were in Mecklenburg County. *The response was that staff would get an answer but the estimated number for 2008 is 80,554.*

Commissioner Ramirez asked about the number of disabled persons being helped by the County. *The response was that Mental Health does provide some services but the specific number is not known at this time.*

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Commissioner Bishop asked if the disabled population overlaps with the elderly abuse, in other words, does it include all of the elderly, which was addressed.

Commissioner Bishop said he's concerned that the measure's data may not give an accurate assessment of "elderly abuse."

**It was the consensus of the Board to approve the proposed revisions to the Community Health & Safety section of the Scorecard.**

### **Effective & Efficient Government**

Commissioner Helms asked about the Effective & Efficient Government Desired Result 5: Improve Employee Efficiency Measure - Employees per Capita. *General Manager John McGillicuddy addressed this measure. It was noted that funded positions will be used in the measure because this reflects true cost to the taxpayer.*

***Commissioner Woodard entered the meeting.***

Chairman Roberts asked if the Employees per Capita Measure includes employees of the Sheriff's Office and the Library. *The response was yes.*

Commissioner Bishop said he agrees with the intent of the Employees per Capita Measure but feels staff needs to figure out a way to measure employee productivity. He said he doesn't think the measure recognizes how employees are doing.

General Manager McGillicuddy said service companies have problems measuring productivity because productivity doesn't mean "quality of work." He said it's a challenge that staff has not been able to overcome, but it has been researched.

Commissioner Bishop noted that pace of work versus quality of work is an issue.

Commissioner Helms said the measure is what the value of the service is.

Chairman Roberts noted that the private sector is a very different environment.

General Manager McGillicuddy said productivity is measurable in some areas of the County in terms of volume.

Commissioner Bentley acknowledged that in government, it's not one size fits all.

Director Johnson said at the corporate level it's more difficult. She said staff is aware of this and continues to study this issue.

Commissioner James asked about Desired Result 6: Reduce/Avoid Costs Measure: Percentage Property Tax Revenue. He asked what the percentage was based on, which was explained.

Commissioner James asked what other jurisdictions were comparisons made with. *The response was Wake, Forsyth, Guilford, Durham, and Cumberland counties.*

Commissioner James asked what the averages of the other counties were and how was it calculated. *The response was that staff would have to get back with an answer.*

Commissioner Bishop asked about Desired Result 6: Reduce/Avoid Costs Measure: Percentage Property Tax Revenue and said it's better to say total tax burden to households.

Chairman Roberts said the problem with Commissioner Bishop's suggestion is that the County is not in control of state and federal revenue.

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General Manager McGillicuddy gave the history of Desired Result 6: Reduce/Avoid Costs Measure: Percentage Property Tax Revenue

**It was the consensus of the Board to approve the proposed revisions to the Effective & Efficient Government section of the Scorecard.**

### **Updated FY2008 Revenue Projections**

Finance Director Dena Diorio gave a Financial Status Report.

The presentation covered

- FY2008 Budget Update
  - Property taxes
  - Sales taxes
  - Investment income
  - Lottery proceeds
  - Expenditures
- Bond/COPs Sales Information
- Debt Service Information

Comments

Commissioner James commented on sales taxes and noted there doesn't appear to be significant growth.

Commissioner Clarke asked about the coverage period of the data provided. *The response was November – January figures.*

*The following was noted:*

- *The County often sees spikes in sales taxes in the spring, not sure why.*
- *The County won't see growth like last year, but will meet budget.*
- *A decrease in sales taxes is expected.*
- *Another impacting factor is how sales tax is levied in Mecklenburg County. Even though the city raises its tax, the County gets less.*

Commissioner Clarke asked was the practice to convey this information to Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. *The response was that this information is shared with CMS' finance director.*

Commissioner Clarke said staff's projections should be shared with the Board of Education.

Commissioner Ramirez asked if staff found out about Board Education member George Dunlap's question regarding lottery funds.

County Manager Jones said the explanation was that the Board of County Commissioners is responsible for school construction and lottery funds can be used for this purpose.

Commissioner James said it looks like the Board will have to lower expenses and/or raise taxes.

***The Board recessed at 10:33 a.m. and reconvened at 10:55 a.m.***

### **Transitioning from Planning to Budgeting**

Budget/Management Director Hyong Yi addressed transitioning from planning to budgeting. Updates were given on items in the FY2008 Restricted Contingency

- Spirit Square
- Jail Diversion

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- Ryan White Grant
- Literacy Collaborative
- Middle School Matters (POST)
- Aerobo Cop Kids Fitness
- Sickle Cell Network (Ready to Work Program)
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Updates were also given on:

- Law Enforcement Service District Funding Model
- Volunteer Fire Department Funding Model
- Requested FY2009 Capital Projects Update

Comments

Commissioner Bentley with respect to the Literacy Collaborative asked would the agencies and staff be looking to see what is being done to avoid duplication. *The response was yes.*

Commissioner Woodard with respect to Aerobo Cop Kids Fitness said she plans to ask for an increase for this program. *General Manager Janice Jackson said it's a 12 month contract in the amount of \$50,000. Also, that any unspent funds will carryover to next fiscal year.*

Commissioner James said he feels Aerobo Cop Kids Fitness should be in CMS' budget.

Commissioner Bishop said he feels Aerobo Cop Kids Fitness is just funding an individual's "pet project."

Commissioner James asked about funding the Sickle Cell Network, which was addressed.

Commissioner Clarke with respect to the Law Enforcement Service District asked about the cap, which was explained.

Director Yi explained that the cap will increase every year. 7% next year and 5.5% after that. It was noted that the City of Charlotte plans to lobby the General Assembly to allow the City to provide law enforcement services in the unincorporated area.

County Manager Jones said City staff has said they would support it, however, it'll be a policy question for City Council.

County staff will pursue options with the General Assembly to allow towns in Mecklenburg County to patrol their extra-territorial jurisdictions. The towns could choose to contract with the City of Charlotte to provide the service. This would break the single LESD into six districts (five towns and Charlotte; Matthews has no ETJ).

Commissioner Ramirez asked about the funding formula for the Law Enforcement Service District. *The response was that staff has looked at other options but basing it on population seems to be the best way to do it.*

Commissioner Bentley asked if staff knew the number of calls received. *The response was no, not at this time.*

Commissioner Bentley asked was it possible to fund the Towns and let them provide the service. *The response was that it would require a change in state law and agreements on the part of the towns.*

Commissioner James said staff should use average per capita police cost.

**It was the consensus of the Board that staff move forward as outlined with respect to the Law Enforcement Service District.**

Commissioner Bishop asked if the Towns assessed a tax in the ETJ. *The response was no but the*

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*County could do it and give funds to the Towns.*

*It was noted also that City Council has not been briefed on this yet.*

General Manager Bobbie Shields addressed Volunteer Fire Departments.

It was noted that the question is how best to provide fire protection service to residents in the unincorporated area.

It was noted that the Robinson Volunteer Fire Department (VFD) wants four full-time firefighters. They have to respond to the state by February 27 and need to know if the County can help by providing additional funding. Robinson VFD is on probation. The Robinson VFD needs to be able to present a plan of action to the state.

The overall concern is that Volunteer Fire Departments may not be able to provide service at a sufficient level to maintain insurance rating and loss of certification.

It was noted that conditions have changed significantly with respect to volunteer fire departments.

The following options for study were noted

- Fire Service Districts in the unincorporated area (similar to LESD) to fund Volunteer Fire Departments
- Fire Service District and contract with City of Charlotte and Towns
- Gauge City/Town interest in servicing ETJ
- Provide more general fund support for Volunteer Fire Departments
- Others

Commissioner James said he feels the City of Charlotte should take care of fire service needs in their ETJ and likewise the Towns should take care of service needs in their ETJ.

General Manager Shields said there are five other VFD similar to Robinson VFD.

Commissioner Bishop asked who owns the Volunteer Fire Departments facilities. *The response was the VFD.*

Commissioner Mitchell asked about the City Fire Department. *The response was that it was not known if they have thought about this at all.*

Commissioner Helms suggested authorizing staff to commit to Robinson VFD \$200,000 contingent upon their willingness to look at the various options.

**It was the consensus of the Board that this be done.**

Commissioner Ramirez asked what the consequences are if the County doesn't assist in this matter. *The response was that the impact would be on the homeowner's because their insurance would go up.*

Commissioner Clarke said this would give the County time to explore how to resolve this matter.

County Manager Jones said he would raise the issue in his Managers' meeting. He could also have a meeting with VFD representatives and let them know the County wants a plan of reorganization.

**Capital Project Requests were reviewed.**

**It was the consensus of the Board to continue to have a Citizens Capital Budget Advisory Committee.**

Commissioner James said the Town of Pineville wants a library. He suggested they do theirs like the Town of Matthews.

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*The Board recessed at 12:20 p.m. and reconvened at 12:45 p.m.*

*Chairman Roberts and Commissioner Woodard were absent when the meeting reconvened and until noted in the minutes.*

*Vice-Chairman Helms presided until Chairman Roberts returned.*

Director of Egovernment and Customer Service Brian Cox introduced the other topics of interest to the Board, which included:

- The Revaluation Process (addressed by Garrett Alexander, Tax Administrator)
- The Requirements of the Redistricting Process (addressed by Sandra Bisanar, Deputy County Attorney)
- The Federal Legislative Agenda (addressed by Deborah Goldberg, Assistant to the County Manager)
- Additional Board Budget/Public Policy Workshop Dates (addressed by Director Yi)

Comments

Commissioner Clarke asked about the schedule for Revaluation, which was addressed.

*Chairman Roberts returned to the meeting.*

*Commissioner Clarke left the meeting and was absent for the remainder of the meeting.*

### **Revaluation**

Commissioner James, with respect to Revaluation, asked about the \$20 billion shown on the chart for Net Increase to Tax base. *The response was that this was for real property only.*

Commissioner Bentley asked for clarification on informal appeals versus Board of Equalization and Review appeals, which was explained.

Director Garrett said because of economic conditions he's concerned about residential.

Commissioner Helms asked whether staff was taking into consideration the number of foreclosures occurring. *The response was yes and that it's being tracked but it's not used to set values.*

### **Redistricting**

The Board was asked if it wanted to consider redistricting next year with the knowledge that in 2010 there will be more census data.

Chairman Roberts said she feels the Board should start taking a look at this issue now.

**It was the consensus of the Board to move forward rather than waiting.**

Commissioner Helms said he would like to see several configurations using guidelines presented last year.

Commissioner Helms suggested consideration be given to having the Chairmanship of the Board a separate office.

### **Federal Legislative Agenda**

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It was noted that May 13<sup>th</sup> starts the Short Session.

**Additional Workshop Dates**

The addition of three budget workshops was proposed: February 26, March 25, and April 22 at 3:00 p.m.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Mitchell, seconded by Commissioner Helms and carried 7-0 with Commissioners Bentley, Bishop, Helms, James, Mitchell, Ramirez and Roberts voting yes, to approve the addition of the following workshops February 26, March 25, and April 22.**

**Other**

Chairman Roberts asked about Criminal Justice and the Kimme Report. She suggested getting together a group to look at court operations and jail operations. She asked was there a process in place to do this. She noted that Paul Fryday is interested in helping.

Associate General Manager Michelle Lancaster suggested the Board wait on pursuing this and to let staff talk to Sheriff Bailey.

Commissioner James asked about the status of revising procedures with respect to immigration and contractors. *The response was something has been drafted for review and will be forthcoming.*

*A copy of each presentation is on file with the Clerk to the Board.*

This concluded the discussion.

*The above is not inclusive of every comment but is a summary of key points.*

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board that the meeting was declared adjourned at 2:24 p.m.

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Janice S. Paige, Clerk

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Jennifer Roberts, Chairman