

MARCH 13, 2012

MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

NORTH CAROLINA
MECKLENBURG COUNTY

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in Budget/Public Policy Session in Conference Center Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center located at 600 East Fourth Street at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 13, 2012.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chairman Harold Cogdell, Jr. and Commissioners
Karen Bentley, Dumont Clarke, Neil Cooksey
George Dunlap, Bill James, Vilma Leake
Jim Pendergraph and Jennifer Roberts
County Manager Harry L. Jones, Sr.
County Attorney Marvin A. Bethune
Clerk to the Board Janice S. Paige

Absent: None

Commissioners Clarke, Dunlap, Leake, and Roberts were absent when the meeting was called to order and until noted in the minutes.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Cogdell, after which the matters below were addressed.

(1) WTVI/CPCC MERGER

Background:

- *WTVI and Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) have developed a plan that would result in CPCC operating WTVI.*
- *The plan includes the transfer of WTVI's FCC broadcast license to CPCC and the lease or transfer of the County-owned WTVI facility to CPCC.*
- *The plan also calls for Mecklenburg County to provide transition funding to CPCC in FY 2013 of up to \$450,000, depending on the actual costs, and includes \$200,000 for new equipment. Funding of \$200,000 for additional equipment refresh also is requested for each of the subsequent fiscal years 2014, 2015 and 2016.*
- *In addition, CPCC is asking the Board to repurpose the \$5 million in currently approved capital funding for CPCC to renovate the vacant Citizens Center for use as a data center instead of a production/laboratory facility for its cable telecasts (Time Warner Cable channel 17).*
- *WTVI also is requesting \$125,000 in funding from the County for severance costs for three of its employees (\$53,000 for unused vacation and \$72,000 for severance for one manager and two technicians).*
- *The plan does not include Mecklenburg County providing any ongoing operations funding to CPCC for the operation of WTVI. However, Mecklenburg County would be expected to provide ongoing support of the facility consistent with the County's current facility support responsibilities (e.g., capital financing, capital reserve, maintenance and*

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security).

- *The plan also requires the Board of Education to consent to the transfer of the WTVI FCC license to CPCC due to the requirements in the CMS/County agreement that established the Charlotte Mecklenburg Public Broadcasting Authority (CMPBA). This requirement is contained within the agreement's terms for dissolving the CMPBA.*
- *The total estimated cost of the proposal for Mecklenburg County would be \$1.15 million.*
- *The timeline for the transition of this merger is accelerated to minimize the amount of transition costs as well as to finalize the transfer of the FCC License prior to the deadline for applying for the eight-year renewal of the license.*
- *Key elements of the timeline are:*
 - March 13 – Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) workshop*
 - March 20 – BOCC approval of plan and associated requests outlined above*
 - March 21 – CPCC applies for FCC license transfer (contingent on BOCC approval and BOE consent)*
 - April 20 – FCC acts on CPCC license request*
 - June 12 – FCC final decision on license request*
 - June – Moving of staff, equipment and operations of CPCC to WTVI facility*
 - July 1 – Formal transfer of FCC license to CPCC*
 - July 1 – Dissolve the CMPBA; transition of CMPBA Board to Board of Advisors for CPCC/WTVI*
 - August – CPCC applies for FCC license renewal*

Dr. Tony Zeiss, President of Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) and Kathy Drumm, Vice-President reported on the proposed merger of WTVI and CPCC. The presentation addressed the following:

- History and Process
- CPCC/WTVI Response

Commissioner Leake entered the meeting.

- Benefits of the Merger

Commissioner Clarke entered the meeting.

- Transfer Process
- Actions Requested of the Board
- Transition Budget Request
- Alternatives/Options
 - The County continues the Joint Undertaking Agreement of 1981, providing funding to WTVI
 - The County takes no action, WTVI goes dark, and the FCC license is surrendered
 - The County accepts the CPCC/WTVI proposal

Comments

Commissioner Cooksey asked about student involvement with the operation of the station by CPCC, which was addressed.

Commissioner Roberts entered the meeting.

Commissioner Cooksey asked about CPCC creating a capital reserve fund, which was addressed.

Commissioner Bentley asked WTVI Executive Director Elsie Garner about WTVI's business

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model and fundraising activity which were addressed.

Commissioner Bentley asked about the management structure under CPCC's administration, which was addressed by Dr. Zeiss. *It was noted that those details had not been finalized, however, there would be a transition management piece, which involved keeping some of current WTVI management staff, such as Ms. Garner for transition purposes. Dr. Zeiss said the manager of the station would have fundraising experience, management experience, and educational experience.*

Commissioner Bentley asked about the cost of the license renewal. *Ms. Garner said the cost should be less than \$10,000, maybe \$5,000. Ms. Garner said the FCC doesn't charge, but that the attorneys charge to complete the paperwork.*

Commissioner Pendergraph asked if CPCC could pay the transition costs. *Dr. Zeiss said no.*

Ms. Garner suggested the County fund WTVI next year and in the interim establish a study Commission, similar to what was done with the Library, to weigh in on a proposed merger.

Commissioner Dunlap entered the meeting.

Commissioner James asked the County Manager to comment on what his logic was for a statement he made in a memo that WTVI was not a viable entity. *County Manager Jones said his logic and what he said in a March 8 communication to the Board was that this was a matter that was being taken out of context with the budget.*

County Manager Jones said it was a context issue to consider saying to CPCC and WTVI that the Board would commit funding, in light of other expected budget increase requests. He said the Board has not seen the totality of the request as it related to next year's budget.

Commissioner James said he didn't feel WTVI was viable as long as SCETV and UNCC PBS were operating.

Commissioner Leake asked about WTVI's lease, which was addressed by Ms. Garner and Ms. Drumm.

Commissioner Leake asked about WTVI's outsourcing to S. C. of its finance department and how many jobs would be lost due to the merger, which was addressed by Ms. Garner.

Commissioner Dunlap asked about the timeline which was addressed by Ms. Garner.

Commissioner Cooksey asked County Manager Jones had he looked at liquidation expenses if Option 2 was chosen. *The response was no.*

Commissioner Cooksey suggested staff take a look at the liquidation expenses.

Commissioner James said he would like know how much money WTVI had remaining in the bank and what WTVI's monthly cash expenses were.

This concluded the presentation. No action was taken or required at this time.

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

Note: The above is not inclusive of every comment but is a summary.

(2) CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG COALITION FOR HOUSING PROJECT

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The Board received a report on the progress of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Coalition for Housing and potential budget implications. Stacy Lowry, Director of Community Support Services and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Coalition for Housing Chair (CMCH), Mike Rizer gave the report. The presentation covered the following:

- Composition/Appointments to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Coalition for Housing
- Ten-Year Plan Goals
 - Housing
 - Outreach and Engagement
 - Prevention
- Policy Shift
- Key Accomplishments
- Community Engagement & Advocacy Committee Accomplishments/Current Initiatives
- Research & Evaluation Committee Accomplishments/Current Initiatives
- Development & Service Integration Committee Accomplishments/Current Initiatives
- Supportive Housing Joint RFP
- Next Steps

Comments

Commissioner Dunlap asked about housing diversity throughout the county which was addressed. He also asked what efforts were being made to educate the community regarding affordable housing, in order to address the myths and stigma associated with affordable housing. *Pamela Wideman with the City of Charlotte addressed this and noted the City of Charlotte's Housing Locational Policy.*

Commissioner Dunlap asked if there was any coordination or partnership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, with respect to land that may be available. *Ms. Wideman said yes, there have been discussions with CMS regarding available land.*

Commissioner Leake asked what were some of the stigmas associated with affordable housing that causes some parts of the community to oppose affordable housing in their neighborhoods. *Mr. Rizer said there's a perception of increased crime and lower property values, but that studies have shown this was not the case.*

Commissioner Clarke said there needed to be a clear understanding of what the County's role was in this process.

General Manager Michelle Lancaster said the County's role had more to do with providing services.

General Manager Lancaster said there's nothing being asked of the County for FY13.

General Manager Lancaster said the County was doing what it has always done with respect to providing services, but in a more strategic manner.

This concluded the presentation. No action was taken or required at this time.

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

Note: The above is not inclusive of every comment but is a summary.

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ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner James, seconded by Commissioner Pendergraph and unanimously carried with Commissioners Bentley, Clarke, Cogdell, Cooksey, Dunlap, James, Leake, Pendergraph, and Roberts voting yes, that there being no further business to come before the Board that the meeting be adjourned at 4:34 p.m.

Janice S. Paige, Clerk

Harold Cogdell, Jr., Chairman