

DECEMBER 10, 2013

MINUTES OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

The Board of Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met in a Budget Public Policy Session in Conference Center Room 267 of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center located at 600 East Fourth Street, Charlotte, North Carolina at 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 10, 2013.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Chairman Trevor M. Fuller and Commissioners
Dumont Clarke, Patricia Cotham, George Dunlap,
Vilma Leake and Kim Ratliff
Interim County Manager Bobbie Shields
Clerk to the Board Janice S. Paige

Absent: Commissioners Karen Bentley, Bill James and Matthew Ridenhour

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

Chairman Fuller called the meeting to order, after which the matters below were addressed.

Commissioner Ratliff entered the meeting immediately following the call to order.

(13-1496) REVALUATION REVIEW VALUE CHANGES AND REFUNDS

Chairman Fuller called on County Tax Assessor Ken Joyner to present the revaluation review matter before the Board.

County Assessor Joyner addressed revaluation review value changes and resulting refunds.

A copy of the information shared is on file with the Clerk to the Board.

Comments

Commissioner Leake asked for clarification of the review process map that was provided to the Board. *County Assessor Joyner explained the purpose of the map and the map legend.*

Commissioner Dunlap asked for clarification of the pre-review value noted in the information provided to the Board. *County Assessor Joyner explained the meaning of pre-review value.*

Interim County Manager Shields asked for clarification of the areas on the review process map listed as previously approved. *County Assessor Joyner clarified what those areas were, Myers Park and Lake Norman. He also addressed the value changes.*

Commissioner Leake noted for the record that the previous Board initiated and began the revaluation review process. She said the current Board just continued that process.

Commissioner Clarke referenced the total amounts listed in the report for the pre-review value, Pearson's value, and percentage of change for years 2011, 2012, & 2013. He asked for clarification as to why Pearson had to make adjustments in all three years. *County Assessor Joyner said it was*

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in response to the Session Law requirements. He also addressed the reasoning behind the adjustments.

Commissioner Cotham asked for clarification regarding the review of other areas of the county. She said it appeared to be scattered. *County Assessor Joyner addressed the plan for reviewing other areas of the county. He said going forward the plan was to work the reviews going north to south.*

Motion was made by Commissioner Clarke and seconded by Commissioner Dunlap and unanimously carried with Commissioners Clarke, Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Leake, and Ratliff voting yes, to adopt resolution entitled:

**MECKLENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DECEMBER 2013 RESOLUTION
CHANGING ABSTRACTS AND AUTHORIZING REFUNDS AND TAXES
IN ACCORDANCE WITH
SESSION LAW 2013-362**

Resolution recorded in full in Minute Book _____, Document # _____.

County Assessor Joyner shared with the Board a copy of the 2011 Property Revaluation Review Brochure.

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

(13-1503) BOARD STRATEGIC AGENDA

Budget/Management Director Hyong Yi and Rebecca Herbert with Business Support Services addressed the preliminary draft of the Strategic Agenda of the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners.

Note: The preliminary draft of the proposed Board Strategic Agenda was developed using input from Board members, the public, County department leaders and other County employees. At its November 12, 2013 workshop, the Board used this input to identify key themes for its strategic agenda. In addition to the proposed goals and objectives, the preliminary draft of the proposed Board Strategic Agenda contained proposed strategies to achieve the goals and objectives, and potential tactics/key elements that could be aligned with the strategies. Also included were pertinent links to the Board's Community & Corporate Scorecard and the current performance related to 2020 Scorecard goals.

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

Summary of Proposed Goals and Objectives

Theme	Economic Development	High-Performing Organization	Quality of Life & Cost of Living	Strategic Planning in Core Service Areas
Proposed Long-Term Goal(s):	<p>Grow jobs in Mecklenburg County to reduce unemployment to pre-recession levels or better</p> <p>Increase economic equality</p> <p>Grow the property tax base to support the need for County services</p>	<p>Optimize organizational performance to sustain Mecklenburg County as highly efficient, effective, accountable and inclusive</p>	<p>Sustain and enhance the quality of life throughout the county, reduce disparities and maintain a stable and affordable property tax rate</p>	<p>Improve the health and well-being of Mecklenburg residents, especially people most in need of support and assistance, through optimal human service delivery</p>
Proposed 18-month Board Objective(s):	<p>Develop an economic development strategic plan for Mecklenburg County</p>	<p>Increase public awareness of Mecklenburg County's key strategies and performance regarding efficiency and effectiveness of services, stewardship, transparency and accountability</p> <p>Strengthen the County's ability to attract, retain and develop employee talent</p>	<p>Establish community consensus on the desired quality of life (including quality of life equity across neighborhoods) in the context of a stable and affordable property tax rate</p>	<p>Establish and/or revise strategic plan goals and objectives for the County's Human Services Agency</p>

Comments

Commissioner Leake asked about the County's role versus the City's role with respect to providing services. She said often people weren't aware of which entity was responsible for what services.

Commissioner Leake also asked about the County's mission statement. Commissioner Leake said the County's mission statement should always be shown on materials for the public's awareness.

Director Yi responded and explained to Commissioner Leake how her questions were tied to the Board's strategic agenda.

Ms. Herbert made a note of, for follow-up purposes, Commissioner Leake's interest in making sure the public understood the County's role and responsibility and that of the City of Charlotte; as well as, public awareness of the County's mission statement.

Theme: Economic Development

Commissioner Cotham asked about the statement "Grow the property tax base to support the need for County services" under the *Economic Development Theme*. Commissioner Cotham said she assumed this was just a broad statement. She said people may take it, however, to mean the County was going to raise taxes, when the idea is to help grow businesses to help the tax base. *The*

response was yes it was a broad statement.

Theme: Quality of Life & Cost of Living

Commissioner Dunlap questioned the use of the word ‘consensus’ with respect to the statement “Establish community consensus on the desired quality of life . . .” under the *Quality of Life & Cost of Living Theme*. Commissioner Dunlap said if the Board was going to set the direction and was in agreement on that direction, he questioned the need for “community consensus” in order to achieve the goal associated with the theme.

Commissioner Dunlap said he supported the idea of seeking public input and informing the community, but he did not think it was necessary to have the “consensus of the community.”

Interim Assistant County Manager Leslie Johnson reminded the Board of the Mecklenburg Livable Communities Project that was on-going.

Interim Assistant County Manager Johnson said the Mecklenburg Livable Communities Project was a two-year process that engaged the public around what they believe should be priorities for the community and to likewise make recommendations to that effect.

Theme: Economic Development

Commissioner Cotham again expressed concern for the reference to “growing the property tax base” under the *Economic Development Theme*. She questioned whether the wording made it clear as to what the intent was.

Commissioner Dunlap said Commissioner Cotham raised a good concern. He said the question was should it be the goal of the County to raise the tax base and should it be listed in this manner; because raising the property tax base happened as a normal course of action via revaluation.

Commissioner Clarke said the reference to “growing the property tax base” under *the Economic Development Theme* had more to do with bringing companies into the County in order to increase the tax base, which could keep the property tax from increasing. He said it’s a matter of how it’s explained to show that it compliments economic development.

Commissioner Cotham said her concern was whether the average person would understand it based on the way it’s worded.

Commissioner Dunlap said he felt everyone was in agreement with the *Economic Development Theme*, but it’s the wording that’s used with respect to “growing the property tax base.”

Interim County Manager Shields said with respect to “growing the property tax base” that the desire was for the community to continue to grow and prosper. He said staff might have to work on the wording in order to capture that intent.

Commissioner Leake asked if the wording would be changed so that the general public would have a better understanding of it. *The response was yes.*

Director Yi said staff would seek public input regarding the Board’s Strategic Agenda between now and the Board’s Planning Retreat in January. He said the Board would be informed of all input received, including feedback on things the public said they did not understand.

Theme: High Performing Organization

Commissioner Leake asked what was the measuring tool for determining whether the County was a high-performing organization. *Director Yi said there were several ways and used as an example, the County’s Community and Corporate Scorecard, which he elaborated on.*

Commissioner Leake talked about the need for more transparency and receiving information in a timelier manner.

Commissioner Leake said she'd like to know who all of the Department Directors were. She said rarely did the Board get an opportunity to see them. Commissioner Leake said directors should be known, so Commissioners would know who to contact or who to refer a constituent to if there was a concern in a particular area. Commissioner Leake said she'd like to know how many department directors there were.

Chairman Fuller asked which two themes were merged together that formed the theme of High Performing Organization. Chairman Fuller said he viewed the purpose of this goal as being the County's way of seeking to find ways to create efficiencies for the purpose of saving taxpayers' dollars.

Director Yi said the intent was also to create effectiveness, transparency, and accountability.

Commissioner Cotham expressed concern about the average citizen's understanding of the wording of the goals and objectives as currently written for High Performing Organization.

Commissioner Clarke asked that staff not only post the Summary of Proposed Goals and Objectives for the four themes, but the accompanying detailed information for each theme that included the summary statement, the long-term goal, 18-month Board objective, strategies, and potential tactics/key elements. He also suggested adding a statement at the bottom of the Summary page directing folks to see the accompanying, more detailed information.

Commissioner Leake suggested staff come up with a way to have the detailed information associated with each theme on the summary page, so that it would be readily available to the public, and not necessary for them to go to another page to view the detail.

Theme: Quality of Life & Cost of Living

Commissioner Leake asked about the current poverty level in Mecklenburg County and addressed how economics and education played a big factor in determining the Quality of Life.

Commissioner Dunlap said the only concern he had at this time with respect to *Quality of Life & Cost of Living Theme* was whether there should be a link to the 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness. He said he noticed that there was a link to the Livable Communities Plan. *Director Yi said staff could add that link.*

Commissioner Ratliff referenced the term "Establishing community consensus ..." listed as the proposed 18-month objective under the *Quality of Life & Cost of Living Theme*. She asked was there a way of knowing whether the public was utilizing the Quality of Life Dash Board. *Interim County Manager Shields said there was a way to determine the number of hits to the site and that staff would report back on that.*

Commissioner Cotham asked for clarity on the statement "reduce disparities" listed as part of the Proposed Long-Term Goal under the *Quality of Life & Cost of Living Theme*, which was addressed. *Director Yi said the intent was to reduce the gap between those that were living in poverty, so that we're moving them out of poverty and into a sustainable life style. Thus, the gap between the wealthy and the poor would shrink.*

Commissioner Dunlap noted that at a recent workshop he attended, it was stated Charlotte ranked 49th in terms of livable cities where folks could get out of poverty.

Commissioner Dunlap said the goals to achieve the objective of getting people out of poverty to reduce disparities were going to be critical.

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Commissioner Clarke suggested staff specify the types of disparities, so that it would clearer, i.e. health, household income and other disparities.

Commissioner Clarke said he had a similar concern for the use of the word “stable” in the statement “maintain a stable and affordable property tax rate listed as part of the Proposed 18-month Board Objective under the *Quality of Life & Cost of Living Theme*. Commissioner Clarke said “stable” could mean different things to different people. He suggested staff delete the word stable and instead say “maintain an affordable, i.e. one that residents are able to meet the expense of, property tax rate.”

Commissioner Leake said she would like future discussion of how to interject the poverty level in the mix of all of this, as well as the question of how do you deal with corporate welfare.

Chairman Fuller questioned the use of the words “community consensus” under the *Quality of Life & Cost of Living Theme*. He asked was the goal simply to establish the community consensus or was it to do something about the quality of life, disparities, etc.

Commissioner Cotham said a lot of people in poverty don’t own homes and that for them their quality of life concern may be whether or not there’s a grocery store nearby. She questioned whether the goals for the *Quality of Life & Cost of Living Theme* addressed the concerns of those in poverty.

Commissioner Dunlap said part of what the goal allowed the County to do was to reduce the number of food deserts and reduce health disparities.

Commissioner Dunlap said perhaps more work was needed on the *Quality of Life & Cost of Living Theme*.

Ms. Herbert said in light of the Board’s feedback, staff would work on the *Quality of Life & Cost of Living Theme* and report back at a later date.

Theme: Strategic Planning in Core Service Areas

Commissioner Dunlap referenced a past discussion regarding the Board serving as the board of health in Mecklenburg County and whether the Board wanted to move to a new model.

Commissioner Dunlap said the discussion was held at the time the position of Director of Social Services was vacant, which had since been filled.

Commissioner Dunlap said under the current model, the County Manager served as the Director of the Human Services Agency.

Interim County Manager Shields said he recalled the discussion and staff was going to come back with a comprehensive plan, including something with regards to MeckLINK.

Interim County Manager Shields said in light of what occurred with MeckLINK, staff was waiting until that matter was resolved before coming back to the Board.

Commissioner Dunlap said he raised the issue in light of the Proposed Long-Term Goal listed for the *Strategic Planning in Core Services Areas Theme* because it stated “Improve the health and well-being of Mecklenburg residents ” Commissioner Dunlap said governance was a part of that.

Commissioner Cotham said she recalled asking about the Consolidated Human Services Agency also. She said she hoped that discussion would come back up.

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Interim County Manager Shields said the proposed 18-month Board Objective under the *Strategic Planning in Core Service Areas Theme* talked about the County's Human Services Agency.

Commissioner Leake expressed concern for the following issues: 1) clarity on who was the board of health in Mecklenburg County, 2) the need for Board committees to address human services issues, 3) the Health Department and how it's organized (She referenced a young man that was working with a program for male youth on one side of town, but he was moved to another area.) and 4) accessibility of Health Department services.

Chairman Fuller summarized Commissioner Leake's comments by saying the issues she identified were 1) whether the County's Human Services Agency was structured the way that it should be and 2) the issue of Board committees.

Chairman Fuller said a discussion of both of these issues was forthcoming.

Commissioner Cotham referenced the last phrase of the Proposed Long-Term Goal under *Strategic Planning In Core Service Areas Theme*, "through optimal human service delivery" and suggested adding also "through education and intervention."

Commissioner Leake said more needed to be done on the County's part to educate the public about the seriousness of HIV/AIDS.

Commissioner Leake said it was important as well to educate the public on the importance of immunizations for school aged children. Commissioner Leake said she requested from CMS a report on the number of students who did not receive their immunizations and weren't attending school.

This concluded the discussion of the four themes. It was concluded that the Board was okay with moving forward with the themes, however, more work was needed on the *Quality of Life & Cost of Living Theme*.

Director Yi said per the Board's feedback, edits would be made to the Strategic Agenda document. He said also that public input would be sought on the Strategic Agenda document and shared with the Board.

Director Yi said staff would report back to the Board regarding the Strategic Agenda at the Board's Planning Retreat scheduled for January 16, 2014. He said the Board would be asked to adopt the Strategic Agenda at that meeting.

Director Yi said the Board's adoption of its Strategic Agenda would serve as the launch point of the Board's FY15 budget process. He said the Board would hold its budget retreat in February.

Commissioner Clarke asked for clarity on what's meant by Strategic Agenda. *Director Yi said it was the entire document presented to the Board at today's meeting and not just the Summary Document.*

Commissioner Clarke asked was it possible for Commissioners to provide additional information to staff regarding strategies and potential tactics/key elements in order to achieve some of the goals.

Director Yi said additional feedback was welcomed and should be sent to him.

Prior to adjourning, Interim County Manager Shields announced that AIG would be coming to Charlotte/Mecklenburg County. He said Commissioners should have received an email from Economic Development Director John Allen regarding the Governor's announcement of this.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Commissioner Dunlap, seconded by Commissioner Clarke and carried 6-0 Commissioners Clarke, Cotham, Dunlap, Fuller, Leake, and Ratliff voting yes, that there being no further business to come before the Board that the meeting be adjourned at 4:39 p.m.

Janice S. Paige, Clerk

Trevor M. Fuller, Chairman