

**CLEVELAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

**October 25, 2005**

The Cleveland County Board of Commissioners reconvened their recessed meeting of October 18, 2005, on this date at the hour of 5:00 p.m., in the Commission Chamber of the Cleveland County Administrative Offices.

**PRESENT:** Ronald J. Hawkins, Chairman  
Jerry L. Self, Vice-Chairman  
Mary S. Accor, Commissioner  
Johnny Hutchins, Commissioner  
Willie B. McIntosh, Commissioner (*entered at 5:15 p.m.*)  
David C. Dear, County Manager  
Wanda Crotts, CMC, County Clerk  
Eddie Bailes, Human Resources Director  
Chris Crepps, Finance Director  
Bill McCarter, Planning Director  
Libby Sasaki, Emergency Management Services  
Dewey Cook, Emergency Management Services Director  
Bobby Horton, Emergency Management Services  
Perry Davis, Emergency Management Services  
Joy Scott, The Star  
Other individual names on file in the Clerk's Office

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Hawkins called the meeting to order, stating the purpose of this meeting is to conduct a planning session for Commissioners. He advised the meeting would be moved to the Conference Room adjacent to the Commission Chamber.

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS FOR CLEVELAND COUNTY**

Dewey Cook, Cleveland County Emergency Services Director/Fire Marshal, introduced Jeff Cardwell, Area 13 Coordinator, North Carolina Department of Emergency Services, stating Mr. Cardwell is here at the request of Commissioners to answer questions regarding Cleveland County's disaster preparedness.

Mr. Cardwell advised he has been employed by NCEMS since 1993. He explained the working relationship between State and local Emergency Management Services (*EM*) as a "partnership." He said his primary mission is "response, preparedness, recovery, and mitigation"; however, he is most involved with the last three areas.

He explained the purpose of a "mitigation plan" and advised that Cleveland County's has been accepted by FEMA. He described his "routine" day and explained the diversity of his role. He said he is in daily contact with Cleveland County's EM staff and "relies on similar partnerships throughout the State" stating that "different parts of the State help each other when needed, it's all based on relationships" adding he "trusts their decisions."

Mr. Cardwell told of his recent experiences in Hancock County, Mississippi, working as a part of the North Carolina efforts to assist in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. He said there was “no remnant of government left” and asked Commissioners to consider what their response to such a monumental disaster and the decisions they would be called upon to make, adding that even the Emergency 911 system was destroyed in Hancock County.

He said “in his career” the most “unique” situation he has worked with in this area was the drought.

There was discussion as to how Cleveland County ranks in preparedness, when compared to other counties on a State, regional, and county level. He feels Cleveland County “ranks high with counties of the same level of population.” He said his “two favorite counties to work”, excluding his home county of Caldwell, are Cleveland and Burke. He said, “There are 10 key people in the State that I count on if there is a disaster in the State – several of them are in Cleveland County.”

Other points of discussion were:

- If you track federal and state monies, Cleveland County has used their money wisely.
- If the evacuation of Charlotte became necessary they would evacuate through Cleveland County and what Cleveland County needs to do to be prepared for that.
- The nine coastal counties are the only counties in North Carolina with a formal evacuation plan.
- Commissioners discussed possibly highlighting main roads out of the county on a map, or evacuating by school districts.
- Dewey Cook discussed nuclear evacuation plans.
- Mr. Cook emphasized the need for a Statewide evacuation plan, then each county would know where their “folks are to move, the number of people in each zone . . . which could be updated annually by tax records.”
- Cardwell felt it would be unlikely that need would arise for a “total county evacuation” therefore Cleveland County does not need a “formal” plan.
- The three disasters of most concern to Cleveland County: (1) major ice storm; (2) hurricane scenario (“feasible to have a Category 1 hurricane with flooding this far inland”).
- Ways to get information out to citizens: handouts in newspapers, media attention, internet, events such as the county fair and civic events, but most important is family preparedness. Emphasizing the need for Commissioners to have their families prepared in disaster, since they would be away from their family to assist in making decisions.
- Important to start teaching preparedness to children in school so the next generation will be educated as to how to handle disasters.
- Discussed how the State dispatches personnel to assist throughout the State for disasters. Commissioners expressed their concerns regarding “several key emergency personnel” being dispatched from the same county.
- Mr. Cardwell reiterated the importance of “on the scene” training, stating he could have gotten “a master’s degree” for what he learned during Hurricane Katrina.
- Mr. Cardwell stated one of the most beneficial training tools is a “large table top exercise.”
- Discussed authority “line of succession” in the declaration of a state of emergency.
- Mr. Cardwell feels Cleveland County is “adequately equipped” but “there can always” be more equipment and personnel. He noted the increased mandates affecting volunteers and their ability to serve. It was noted that these training mandates are in effect “unfunded mandates.”
- Chairman Hawkins noted “several years ago” he and Commissioners attempted to get legislation passed that would require nursing home to have generators, which he thinks is still a necessity.
- Discussed possible county ordinances that would require generators, although legislation is still the most effective way of addressing this issue.
- Mr. Cook said he has documented every vital facility, with coordinates, on the GIS system.
- Mr. Cardwell feels the best measure of protection a county can have is to have emergency management staff dedicated solely to emergency management, not having staff “spread out among other jobs” and “wearing several hats.”

- Feels 800 MHz communication system is the best route and if it is statewide “would help toward making (*the State*) a one-radio system in most situations.”
- Mr. Cardwell recommended a proclamation be drafted for each municipality in order to be ready for a disaster and discussed the possibility of a “memorandum of understanding” so Commissioners could declare a state of emergency for the entire county if needed.
- Discussed posting the “e-plan” on a server that can be viewed by Commissioners.
- Referred to the state of emergency declaration as a “toolbox” of what you can do.

**CONSENSUS:** *To have Dewey Cook pursue the development of a prearranged authority*

*(proclamation), so the County Commissioners can declare a state of emergency whenever deemed necessary, which would also apply to municipalities.*

**CONSENSUS:** *Direct County Manager to determine what Commissioners have legal authority to do regarding the possibility of enacting an ordinance that requires generators for nursing home facilities.*

### **EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION**

Eddie Bailes reviewed the plans for the ceremony to be held on January 19, 2006.

### **STUDENT ADVOCY PROGRAMS**

Commissioner Accor discussed the “Commissioners School” conducted each summer by Gaston County Commissioners to help deter the high drop out rate and increased admissions to alternative schools. She suggested holding a week long session at Gardner-Webb University and target rising 9<sup>th</sup> graders. She said each Commissioner could take part in teaching and serve as mentors for the students throughout the school year. It was suggested that Communities In Schools could also help with this program.

**CONSENSUS:** *Commissioner Accor and Chairman Hawkins will develop guidelines and cost estimates and bring to the Board at a later date.*

### **CHARLES HARRY ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING PARKING LOT**

Work in progress, with anticipated completion date before Thanksgiving.

### **COURTHOUSE/LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER DESIGNATED SMOKING AREA**

Sheriff is to report to Commissioners with alternative site for smoking. Mr. Dear will contact the Sheriff to determine the status of this project.

### **MINIMUM HOUSING VIOLATION CASES**

Mr. Dear stated that Mr. McCarter has 31 cases in the Light Oak community that are ready to be processed. These cases were started in the spring, and will be an agenda item for the regular meeting of Tuesday, November 1, 2005. He advised these cases were initiated by the people of the community, who have worked hard to clean up their community and make it crime free.

Commissioner McIntosh questioned how the County Code could be applied to lots where the grass is overgrown and the property is generally unkempt. Mr. Dear noted a complaint of this type would be a “nuisance ordinance.”

**CONSENSUS:** It was the consensus of the Board, *to instruct Mr. McCarter and the Planning Board to examine such an ordinance.*

#### **NOISE ORDINANCE**

There was discussion regarding a citizen complaint received about the lack of a noise ordinance in the County. It was noted there was once such an ordinance; however, it was deemed to be unenforceable, so it was repealed.

**CONSENSUS:** It was the unanimous consensus of the Board, *this was not something Commissioners wish to pursue at this time.*

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Dear reviewed a proposal to purchase an estimated 53 acres on Plato Lee Road to be used for economic development “product.”

**ACTION:** Jerry Self made the motion, seconded by Willie McIntosh, and unanimously adopted by the Board, *to direct the County Manager to negotiate the property purchase at \$3,500 per acre (parcels #32564 and #32573) based on a new survey, from County Reserve funds.*

#### **GASOLINE PRICES**

Commissioner Hutchins suggested the county consider “buying fuel directly from Paul Creek.” Mr. Dear advised the county does purchase gasoline based on the competitive market and low bidder process, but suggested Commissioner Hutchins provide the County Purchasing Agent with a contact person so she can pursue this further.

#### **HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION – MUSEUM/COURTHOUSE**

Mr. Dear noted the application for the County Museum (*old courthouse*) to be considered for Historic Landmark Designation status through the Cleveland County Historic Preservation Commission, has been withdrawn. Commissioner Hutchins has expressed concerns as to possible limitations the designation may put on the building. It was noted this building has already received federal and state designation and the main advantages of local designation are tax reductions.

Further information will be presented to Commissioners during a regular meeting in the future.

#### **CLOSED SESSION**

**ACTION:** Willie McIntosh made the motion, which was seconded by Johnny Hutchins, and unanimously adopted by the Board, *to conduct a closed session regarding personnel matters*, as allowed under North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(1)(6).

**RECONVENE IN REGULAR SESSION**

**ACTION:** Willie McIntosh made the motion, seconded by Jerry Self, and unanimously adopted by the Board, to reconvene the meeting in open session. Chairman Hawkins reported the Board did conduct a closed session as stated – two personnel matters were discussed; no action was taken.

**CHAMBER BUDGET**

Commissioner McIntosh, a member of the Cleveland 20/20 committee, reviewed various aspects of the Economic Development and Chamber budget.

**PRESS AND NEWS MEDIA POLICY**

It was the consensus of the Board that press releases or general information updates, they should be given to all media.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, Johnny Hutchins made the motion, seconded by Jerry Self, and unanimously adopted by the Board, to adjourn the meeting (*at 9:35 p.m.*).

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*Ronald J. Hawkins, Chairman  
Cleveland County Board of Commissioners*

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*Wanda Crotts, CMC, Clerk  
Cleveland County Board of Commissioners*