

CLEVELAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

September 23, 2013 Worksession

The Cleveland County Board of Commissioners reconvened their regular meeting of September 17, 2013 on this date, at the hour of 5:00 p.m., in the County Commissioners Chamber of the Cleveland County Administrative Offices.

PRESENT: Ronnie Hawkins, Chairman
Jason Falls, Vice-Chairman
Susan Allen, Commissioner
Johnny Hutchins, Commissioner
Eddie Holbrook, Commissioner
David Dear, Interim County Manager
Andrea Leslie-Fite, County Attorney
Kerri Melton, County Clerk
Jessica Pickens, *The Shelby Star*
Lib Stewart, *The Kings Mountain Herald*
Other individual names on file in the Clerk's Office

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hawkins called the meeting to order and began reviewing the goals of the meeting held on April 30, 2013. He explained, the purpose of this meeting is to give guidance to the new County Manager regarding goals set by the Commissioners.

SHORT TERM GOALS

- *Address the Revaluation Issue and the effect of economic projects on the budget-* Commissioners have rescheduled the revaluation until 2016. **Commissioners asked the Clerk to make note on the calendar to provide Commissioners with real estate trends some time in 2014.**
- *Additional funding in Animal Control for unwanted pet population-* In an effort to help with the issue of unwanted pets, Cleveland County has hired a rescue coordinator. During the discussion regarding unwanted pets, Commissioner Hutchins suggested going back to opening the Animal Shelter on Saturdays for a six month trial. **Commissioners asked that staff present them with numbers regarding the cost for opening on Saturdays for a trial period of six months.**
- *Only use gas chamber for aggressive animals-* Commissioners discussed the issue of animal control at length and several gave their opinions on priorities such as spay/neuter clinic, giving animals additional shots and the possibility of a licensing fee. Commissioner Hutchins who serves on the Animal Control Task Force made note the task force will be coming before the Commissioners with information shortly. **Commissioners asked that staff put all possible animal control expenses in one document with dollar figures and bring the information before Commissioners for further action.**
- *Explore outsourcing euthanization process-* (addressed under other Animal Control items)
- *Salary increase for employees-* Commissioners were able to give a 2% COLA in July of this year. They expressed their desire to do more, however, due to funding, they did the best they could. **Commissioners asked Interim Manager David Dear to discuss the salary schedule with the new County Manager to determine a way to possible get the salaries more in line especially for those with salaries in Steps 1-4.**
- *Small business incentive program-* Former County Manager Eddie Bailes had presented a small business incentive program to Commissioners last year which, if approved, would give incentives to small businesses based on investment and number of jobs. Commissioners voiced concern that many small businesses are gone within two years and also that the dollar amount would be insignificant. Commissioner Falls suggested finding a way to guide prospective small business owners through opening a small business. **Commissioners asked staff to work with Cleveland Community College to develop a pamphlet of the steps required to open a small business in Cleveland County. They also asked staff to inform Stuart Hair with the Cleveland County**

Economic Development Partnership (CCEDP) to report back to Commissioners is there is a small business expanding and Commissioners will review on a case by case basis.

- *Review Economic Development Partnership structure-* Commissioners spoke positively about the Economic Development Partnership and the hard work they are doing. Commissioner Hutchins feels as though the county needs a funding mechanism for ED. **Commissioners asked that staff see what the numbers would look like if they were to take an additional 5% of each incentive grant and put it into a special account for Economic Development funding.**
- *Increase businesses locating to the Cleveland Mall-* The mall is being very aggressive trying to attract new businesses. Commissioners felt the construction of new hotels at the mall would help mall management with recruitment.
- *Lobby for Tier I status-* Commissioners as well as staff have had many conversations with folks in Raleigh. It is believed there is no chance Cleveland County will return to Tier I status in the near future.
- *Vision for new Health Department building and incorporation of DSS to make it a “campus-type” setting-* Plans for the new Health Department are well under way. Current plans have a large conference room area which Commissioners would like to be available to all three buildings (DSS, Health, Cooperative Extension) on that campus.
- *Explore options to help Volunteer Fire Departments with their budgets-* A tax increase this year should help the Volunteer Fire Departments with their budgets.
- *Continue recruitment of hotels to Cleveland County-* Commissioners have approved an incentive agreement for a Hampton Inn to locate on the mall property. ED staff is working on recruiting another hotel in that area. Plans are to only approve incentive packages for the next two hotels to locate in the county.
- *Develop an arts/recreation committee tasked with answering questions about facilities or events in the county-* David Dear informed Commissioners that the County has provided partial funding for a community-wide events calendar. **Commissioners asked staff to talk to the Chamber and make sure that community events ALL across the county are communicated.**
- *Assure no citizen in the county goes hungry-* **As a member of the Senior Center Board, Commissioner Hutchins was asked to bring information back to the board regarding how citizens get on/off the waiting list for Meals on Wheels.**
- *Create a YouTube channel that is accessible to the public-* Commissioner Falls explained a YouTube Channel will be a great way to get information out to the public at little or no cost to the county. He suggested there be a home page for the county and then each Department would have their own page. **Chairman Hawkins asked that Commissioner Allen spearhead this project.**
- *Continue supporting the Upper Cleveland Reservoir-* Commissioners continue to support construction of the Upper Cleveland Reservoir.
- *Ensure citizens understand proper flag etiquette-* Commissioner Falls has discussed the issue of flag etiquette in our schools with the Marine Corps League. The Marine Corps league will be willing to go through the schools to share with students. **Commissioner Falls will talk with the Veteran’s Council regarding this project.**
- *Look at hiring an employee for grant writing/administration-* Commissioners shared many suggestions regarding a grant writer for Cleveland County including help from Gardner Webb and Cleveland Community College. Several Commissioners felt as though the right person birdogging grants will more than pay their way. **Commissioners asked that David Dear discuss costs for hiring a full-time grants person with the new County Manager.**
- *Increase travel/tourism by transferring more occupancy tax to support it-* Commissioners would like to further review how the current Travel and Tourism organization is doing before possibly transferring any more occupancy tax to support it.
- *Create a synergy of travel/tourism efforts across the county-* (addressed under arts/recreation committee item)
- *Increase support of Veteran’s in the county-* Commissioners recently moved the Veteran’s office to a suite on the first floor of the County Administration Building.
- *Look at security in county buildings including a Deputy at County Commissioners meetings-* Commissioners did not feel as though a Deputy is needed at County Commissioners meetings. **Commissioners asked that the Sheriff’s Office provide more of a presence in County Buildings by dropping in and walking around the different locations.**

- *Possible partnership with youth or civic organizations to help for trash issue- Commissioners discussed the possibility of promoting the Adopt A Highway program throughout the county.*

LONG TERM GOALS

- *Over five years, reduce euthanization by 50%- (addressed earlier in the meeting under Animal Control items)*
- *Increase public hours at the animal shelter-(addressed earlier in the meeting under Animal Control items)*
- *Spay/Neutering Clinic and Education (addressed earlier in the meeting under Animal Control items)*
- *Continue to work on economic growth- Commissioners continue to work closely with the CCEDP to recruit businesses to Cleveland County.*
- *Increased support of Volunteer Fire Fighters- If Commissioners hired a grant writer, he/she could possibly provide the Volunteer Fire Departments with grant writing assistance.*
- *Work with DSS to support efforts to increase the number of foster homes in Cleveland County- DSS is continuing to work on this effort. DSS had a meeting where they encouraged foster families to bring a friend. During this event, they enrolled thirty new foster families.*
- *Work with community partners to ensure those with mental/physical handicaps have the same opportunities as others (ex: handicapped playgrounds)- Commissioners have heard often about the need for a handicapped accessible playground in the county. They referred to a zoning case they previously heard where a citizen had planned to construct a ballfield and play area for the handicapped. **Commissioners asked staff to determine the status of that project.***
- *Look at recreation needs in the county- no plans discussed.*
- *More activities for youth in Cleveland County- The Boys and Girls Club is working towards building a teen center for Cleveland County Youth.*
- *Water/Sewer access for all Cleveland County residents- no plans discussed.*
- *Increase county-wide recycling efforts- GDS, the County Solid Waste Provider, believes Cleveland County needs county-wide recycling. Many municipalities are currently providing this service to their residents. **Commissioner Hutchins will follow up with Sam Lockridge regarding the possibility of one-stop recycling.***

RECESS TO RECONVENE

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, Johnny Hutchins made the motion, seconded by Jason Falls, and unanimously adopted by the Board, to *adjourn*. The next regular scheduled meeting will be held ***Tuesday, October 1, 2013 in the Commissioners Chamber.***

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

*Kerri Melton, County Clerk
Cleveland County Board of Commissioners*