

Regular Session, November 7, 2011, 9:30 a.m.
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Appointments

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Goals

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The Catawba County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, November 7, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. in the Robert E. Hibbitts Meeting Room of the 1924 Courthouse, 30 North College Avenue, Newton, North Carolina.

Present were Chair Katherine W. Barnes, Vice-Chair Lynn M. Lail and Commissioners Dan A. Hunsucker, Barbara G. Beatty and Randy Isenhower.

Also present were County Manager J. Thomas Lundy, Assistant County Manager Dewey Harris, County Attorney Debra Bechtel, Deputy County Attorney Anne Marie Pease and County Clerk Barbara Morris.

1. Chair Katherine W. Barnes called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.
2. Commissioner Randy Isenhower led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
3. Commissioner Dan A. Hunsucker offered the invocation.
4. Commissioner Isenhower made a motion to approve the minutes from the Board's Retreat of October 10, 2011 and the Regular Meeting of October 17, 2011. The motion carried unanimously.
5. Recognition of Special Guests: Chair Barnes welcomed everyone present.
6. Public Comments for Items Not on the Agenda: None by the public. Chair Barnes did recognize new Observer New Enterprise Report Matthew Tessnear.
7. Presentations:
 - a. Commissioner Barbara G. Beatty presented Social Worker Supervisor III Sybil Good and Adoptive Parent Laura Davis with a proclamation declaring November as Adoption Awareness Month, to recognize the County's efforts to create better public awareness of children seeking permanent homes through adoption. Caring adults can make a positive difference in the lives of young people, siblings, children of different ethnicities and youth harmed by abuse. Over 1,150 foster children were adopted in

North Carolina in 2010 and 62 of those children were in the Catawba County foster care system. Ms. Davis spoke of the joys of adoption and introduced her two adopted daughters, Layla and Destiny.

b. Vice-Chair Lynn M. Lail presented Julie Packer of Palliative CareCenter & Hospice of Catawba Valley with a proclamation declaring November as Hospice and Palliative Care Month to recognize that hospice and palliative care provides patients and families with the highest quality of care during life-limiting illness and at the end of life, through pain management and symptom control. This care allows patients to live fully, up until their final moments, surrounded and supported by loved ones, friends and committed caregivers. Ms. Packer invited everyone to visit the new Hospice facility that had just opened in Sherrills Ford.

c. Commissioner Isenhower presented Public Health Director Doug Urand with a proclamation declaring November as Home and Hospice Care Month to recognize that in-home healthcare services provide for the health and social needs of Catawba County citizens. This care enables citizens to access a wide variety of quality services which provide preventive care, acute care, sustainable long-term care and palliative care, and helps keep families intact while preserving an individual's independence and dignity in the setting of his or her choice.

d. Commissioner Hunsucker presented Cooperative Extension Director Greg Carpenter with a proclamation declaring the week of November 18-24 as Farm-City Week to foster cooperation and an exchange of information between two essential segments of our society: farmers and city dwellers. The proclamation will urge citizens to participate in activities and events that have been designed to introduce people from both "worlds" to the lives and work of each other. Mr. Carpenter noted that Catawba County farms (750 active) grossed \$55 million last year and complimented the recent Chamber Tour where businessman visited these farms.

e. Human Resources Director Cynthia Eades recognized nineteen graduates of the County's Mini Course. Employees voluntarily attend sessions during lunch hours to learn more about the services each County department provides. This year's graduates include: Sandie Bowman, Sherry Buterbaugh, Benita Deal, Christina DeHard, Jim Dickerson, Debbie Helton, Shonda Hollis, Lori Kadlec, Thu Ngo, Kelly Pollitt, Amy Purdy, Henry Rivas, Beth Schlosser, Stephanie Shepherd, Dawn Sides, Amy Sigmon, Regina Speed, H'Lee Vang and Barbara Wager.

8. Appointments:

Chair Barnes recommended the reappointment of the following students to the Catawba County Youth Council: Dale Bass (Maiden); Andrew Beard (Bandys); Ashley Bright-Smith (Maiden); Shivan Desai (Newton-Conover); Lake Gibson (Bunker Hill); Isaiah Henderson (Maiden); Jonathan Lambert (Hickory Christian); Lilly Lequire (Newton Health & Science); Jacqlyn Lo (Hmong Association/Challenger High); Anne Orgain (Hickory High); Jason Setzer (Bunker Hill); Taylor Simmons (Bunker Hill); Shaquille Smith (Hickory Career Arts Magnet); Anna Taylor (St. Stephens); Allison Todd (Newton Health & Science); and Kaitlyn Winn (Fred T. Foard). Chair Barnes also recommended the appointment of these new members to the Catawba County Youth Council: Katie Ayers (Bunker Hill); Jessica Benitez (Centro Latino/Newton-Conover); Sydney Cline (St. Stephens); Mia Gore (Fred T. Foard); Meghan Greene (Girl Scouts/University Christian); Taylor Hamby (Bandys); Thomas Hill (Challenger High); Darby Monsam (Bandys); Alexander Purut (Boy Scouts/Newton Health & Science); Sarahi Robles (Newton-Conover); Sophia Sharp (Maiden); Taylor Thompson (Newton-Conover) and Jeffrey Young (Fred T. Foard). All these terms will expire on November 30, 2012.

Commissioner Beatty recommended the appointment of Joel Fish to replace Sheriff Coy Reid on the Community Child Protection Fatality Team. This position on the Team is a representative of the Sheriff's Office and has no expiration date.

These recommendations came in the form of a motion. The motion carried unanimously.

9. Other Items of Business:
Board Chair summarized the actions taken to achieve the Board's goals for Fiscal Year 2010-2011, which were as follows:

(Goal #1) Prepare a Fiscal Year 2010-2011 budget which maintains services and momentum as much as possible in light of economic uncertainty and no property tax increase. Examine planned investments and expenditures to ensure it is both a good time to build and a good time to borrow funds for building, and make sure we have the necessary funds to run required services such as health, safety and education. Plan for flat growth in tax revenues. Look at ways to be more efficient and see if the County could perform some services for the smaller municipalities in payroll, purchasing, etc., which could generate some revenue for the County and save money for the smaller municipalities. Continue to examine ways to reduce expenses in each department and ways to conserve energy where possible.

To address this goal, the County budget was adopted with no countywide property tax increase; the fourth year without an increase as promised with the passage of the ¼ cent sales tax in November 2007. The budget totaled 18.7 percent less than the FY2009/10 year budget. This budget met the Board of Commissioners' goal of maintaining services and momentum as much as possible without a property tax increase. This was accomplished through reductions in departments' base budgets, the elimination of funding for 39 positions, some reductions in library and park hours, no new recommended County programs and no cost of living or performance pay increases for County employees.

The Board's utilization of unique funding opportunities such as Qualified School Construction Bonds and Build America Bonds saved the County over \$6.4 million in interest costs. This funding, coupled with lower construction costs and material prices, allowed the County to proceed with construction of the new Newton-Conover Middle School, renovations to Arndt Middle School, Hickory High School, and Catawba Valley Community College, the Webb Murray Elementary School classroom expansion, and the expansion of the kitchen/cafeteria at St. Stephens High School.

In its continuing effort to partner and support municipalities, the Board took actions which assisted community partners in various ways. This included the donation of a 1999 service vehicle to the Bandys Crossroads Volunteer Fire Department and two surplus vehicles to Exodus Homes to be utilized for transporting homeless recovering addicts, alcoholics and formerly incarcerated people to work, support groups and medical appointments. To further assist community partners, the Board waived solid waste tipping fees for the Lake Hickory Association and Lake Lookout Protective Association Big Sweep lake cleanup; building permit fees for the 2010 Ensure Classic at Rock Barn and 2011 Greater Hickory Classic at Rock Barn; and tipping fees and building permit fees for property owners affected by tornadoes which came through the County on October 26, 2010.

In this partnering effort, two revenue sharing agreements, one with the Town of Maiden and one with the City of Conover, have ensured sewer connections for three County schools—Bunker Hill High School, Oxford Elementary School and River Bend Middle School—and water for the Cardinal Estates Subdivision and properties along Jim Beard Road, Robinette Road and Mockingbird Lane. This action addressed issues associated with aging on-site sewer disposal systems at the schools and provided service to approximately twenty residences.

(Goal #2) Continue strategies to create jobs through educational opportunities to make sure the workforce is trained for tomorrow's jobs, and invest in infrastructure and development of the County's quality of life. Remain aggressive in recruiting most favored industries to the area, and add an additional multi-jurisdictional business park. Look for out of the box ideas that others are not doing. Recruit industries that are related to existing industries.

To address this goal, the Board continued its efforts to recruit new industry to the area and maintained its commitment to support existing businesses with incentives for growth and expansion.

As a result of incentive agreements with Pierre Foods, Poppelmann Plastics, Sarstedt, and Dalco Nonwoven, expansions have resulted in the retention of 750 jobs, the creation of 539 new jobs and \$45

million in new investment in the county. The consolidation of Lee Industries' offices and its move to the former Conover Chair facility in Conover, as a result of incentive agreements with both Conover and the County, resulted in the use of a vacant industrial building, retention of 490 jobs, the addition of 74 new jobs over three years, \$1 million in investment, and payment of \$203,000 in outstanding property taxes on the building.

New industry successes have included agreements with Fairmont Designs, Inc., and Turbocoating Corp, USA. which now occupy the former Thomasville Furniture building and the former Corning Cable Systems building in Hickory. In addition to utilizing this existing manufacturing space, 280 jobs will be created, with \$15.8 million in investment.

(Goal #3) Continue to develop and build the EcoComplex at the landfill and promote the EcoComplex for environmental and economic development purposes.

In its effort to continue to develop and build the EcoComplex at the landfill and promote the EcoComplex for environmental and economic development purposes as set forth in its third goal, the Board awarded a construction contract for the Crop Processing Facility at the Biodiesel Research Facility to Hamlett Associates of Climax, North Carolina. The Biodiesel Research and Production Facility includes a Crop Processing Facility which will clean, dry, store and crush harvested seed crop. The County has a lease agreement with Appalachian State University for the Biodiesel Research and Production Facility, with a primary purpose of operating a Biodiesel Testing Lab. This Lab will assist Catawba County in producing biodiesel fuel from crops grown at the EcoComplex, assist emerging biodiesel producers in Western North Carolina in assessing the quality of their fuels derived from varying feedstock, and provide biodiesel fuel to the County's Landfill operational fleet. Catawba County and Appalachian State University have received grant funds from the North Carolina Biofuels Center, for processing equipment in the Crop Processing Facility, in the amounts of \$150,000 and \$129,000, respectively.

Staff continues to have meetings, presentations and tours with other potential private partners, as well as State and local officials, with the express intent of promoting the EcoComplex as a location for new business/industry and as a unique opportunity for grant and other funding with the specific outcome of increasing the County's tax base and creating new jobs within the County.

(Goal #4) Continue customer service emphasis in all departments. Focus on communications efforts with citizens so citizens know what is going on in County government.

Positive customer service comments are received on a consistent basis, which illustrates the success in achieving the Board's fourth goal. Catawba County Emergency Services and Building Services' response to the October 2010 tornadoes was a prime example of the County's customer service focus. The County continues its twice-yearly Household Hazardous Waste and Electronics collections to serve the County's citizens and keep millions of pounds of hazardous waste from our landfill.

The Catawba County Public Information Office continues to provide a program of public information to keep citizens informed of important county government initiatives and action. The office sent out 203 releases to media and directly to the public between July 1, 2010, and June 30, 2011. This information was relayed to the public from the County's website, a monthly e-mail newsletter, a radio program, and through newspapers.

In an effort to enhance the County's public information efforts and find more ways to inform citizens about what Catawba County is doing, staff developed a Citizen Information Plan in 2006. This Plan was amended and upgraded following a study of the County's public information and citizen engagement practices in 2007 by an International City-County Management Association Peer Assistance Work Team. The Plan has been updated and enhanced every year since 2006, with the advice and consent of the Board of Commissioners.

In addition, individual County departments have extensive public awareness programs through newsletters, department-specific e-newsletters, and website content. Web-based applications such as

Facebook, Twitter, You Tube videos, Flickr photo sharing, and RSS feeds are being used for outreach and education.

(Goal #5) Continue strategies to protect our environmental resources through active involvement in the IBT litigation/resolution and as members on air quality boards and commissions.

In keeping with the Board's fifth goal, in January 2010 the Board joined with other local governments across the region in approving an agreement with the cities of Concord and Kannapolis to resolve the appeal of the Interbasin Transfer (IBT) granted to Concord and Kannapolis by the State of North Carolina. This agreement established significant reductions in the amount of water that could be transferred out of the Catawba River during drought conditions. This agreement resolved the ongoing IBT litigation.

Chair Barnes is a member of the Western Piedmont Council of Governments Air Quality Oversight Committee, as she has been since the Board appointed her to this committee in July 2004. Chair Barnes continues to apprise the Board of all developments regarding air quality issues and continues to communicate with the EPA regarding PM2.5 (particulate matter) attainment.

10. Attorney's Report: County Attorney Debra Bechtel introduced Paul Fogleman who had joined the County Legal Department in a part-time attorney position.
11. Manager's Report.
County Manager J. Tomas Lundy recommended the Board move into closed session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(4) to discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body. He anticipated no action to be taken upon return to open session. Commissioner Hunsucker made a motion to move into closed session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(4). The motion carried unanimously. The Board moved into closed session at 10:10 a.m.
12. Adjournment: The Board returned to open session. Commissioner Beatty made a motion to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Katherine W. Barnes, Chair
Catawba County Board of Commissioners

Barbara E. Morris
County Clerk