

**PITT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA
MARCH 29, 1999**

The Pitt County Board of Commissioners met in a workshop session on Monday, March 29, 1999, at 9:00 a.m. in the Auditorium, Pitt County Agricultural Building, Greenville, North Carolina with the following commissioners present:

Eugene James, Chairman
Jeffrey E. Savage, Vice Chairman
Glenn Bowen, Commissioner
Charles P. Gaskins, Commissioner
David Hammond, Commissioner
Thomas H. Johnson, Commissioner
Mark W. Owens, Jr., Commissioner
M. Theresa Shank, Commissioner
Beth B. Ward, Commissioner

Also present were:

Thomas B. Robinson, County Manager
JoAnne Burgdorff, County Attorney
Susan J. Banks, Clerk to the Board
Arlen Holt, PIO and Cable Coordinator
John K. Bulow, Assistant Manager
Melonie Bryan, Director of Financial Services

Call to Order and welcome by Chairman James.

Prayer was provided by Vice Chairman Savage.

Commissioner James stated he would like to have the Board meet to discuss the situation at Mental Health.

UPON MOTION by Commissioner Bowen, seconded by Commissioner Ward, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda for this meeting as presented.

Mr. Robinson stated that this meeting was a follow-up to the last workshop, where the Board began discussing the Rules of Procedure for Board meetings. Mr. Robinson stated that he had invited Mr. Kurt Jenne, from the Institute of Government, University of Chapel Hill, to help with this session.

Mr. Jenne stated that the purpose of this meeting was to give the commissioners the opportunity to express their expectations of each other as commissioners and the chairman, as well as the manager, attorney and clerk, who are appointed by the Board.

Commissioners expressed the following as expectations of each other:

- When giving an opinion to the press, state that it is yours and not the board's opinion
- all elected by districts; first responsibility is to your district but represent all the people of the County.
- Commissioners responsibility to listen to all the constituents and make decisions that benefit the total county. Listen to all citizens and to each other before making a decision using your own best judgement to serve the entire county.
- out of respect, stick to the agenda, stay on time and on the topic
- respect each others' right to disagree without being disagreeable
- once a decision has been made and passed (approved by the Board), members need to recognize that the Board has made a decision; each commissioner needs to accept it, whether agreed or disagreed
- acceptance does not prevent a commissioner from continuing to attempt to change it - using a proper procedure and decorum
- respect the right of all districts to be represented on boards and commissions appointed by commissioners.
- commissioners should know the rules of procedures and use them (follow them).
- commissioners do their homework (on agendas) so discussion takes place based on being informed

Expectations of Chair as discussed:

- commissioners should be recognized before talking
- follow Board's rules of procedure to best of ability
- commissioners be on time for meetings
- give others opportunity to talk before speaking a second time on an issue
- provide leadership by establishing with the Board of commissioners an agenda for the coming year, goals/objectives/plans for coming year or three year period.
- represent the Board's policies, not his/her own position
- chair has responsibility for maintaining control/orchestrating meeting; control agenda with fairness
- chair should be able to turn control of meeting over to vice-chair when he/she wants to participate in debate
- commissioners to attend all assigned meetings on behalf of Board of Commissioners - - report back to Board
- have reports back to Board on a monthly basis from committee meetings
- address remarks to chair unless otherwise decided by Board

Board Expectations of Manager:

- be honest with Board - tell it the way it is
- provide information to the public that allows public to know how well the Board is doing things for the good of the county
- have regular and good communication with each county commissioner with information before it gets in the paper
- plan ahead: weekly/monthly/annually
- make sure commissioners are not caught unaware of things important to the public - heavy issues

- hire and monitor very competent people
- Board should give manager free hand in managing departments but then hold him accountable
- tell Board at beginning of fiscal year goals/objectives/priorities
- have the Board conduct annual performance evaluation based on established objectives
- meet regularly with department heads, with open lines of communication so he/she can inform the Board about any department problems or projects
- commissioners should be able to get information directly from department heads
- one board member should not unilaterally impose policy on manager
- hiring county staff should result in the best qualified staff that reflects the racial composition of Pitt County

Commissioner Bowen asked to be excused at 11:45 a.m., with no objections.

Commissioner Shank left for the Social Services Board meeting at 11:50 a.m.

Expectations of the Manager, continued:

- deliver annual recommended budget in time for Board of Commissioners to deliberate and adopt
- be an effective spokesperson for the Board
- do not totally depend on what other counties are doing - be creative when necessary

Chairman James called for a special meeting at 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 31, 1999, to discuss the Mental Health Program. (This meeting was later cancelled by the Chairman.)

Commissioner Owens stated that these proceedings today have been done less formally for years and this was a waste of time. He stated it is more important what the Board directs the Manager versus what we expect of them. We need to trust and respect each other.

Manager's Expectations of Board:

- give direction from board, not individually, preferably by motion.
- support staff in public - treat as a professional
- avoid bringing up matters at Board meetings where there has been no contact with Manager about item.
- let Manager know if he is doing something you do or don't like
- trust manager and departments heads to do their job. We work for the Board. If we prove untrustworthy or incompetent, get someone else in whom you can trust and view as competent.
- give Manager clear expectations of Board on performance objectives annually. Give feedback, preferably at some other time than budget time.
- if you have an issue to address, go through the Manager and seek his help soliciting department and others help.

- would like Board to develop and then update every other year three to five year strategic objectives and financial and capital improvement plans to accomplish objectives. Manager can then prioritize interests and goals.

Expectations of Clerk:

- keep accurate records and produce in a timely fashion
- keep Board informed on important dates, meetings, schedules
- produce correspondence for individual commissioners to other government officials
- communicate with public, conduct greatly influences the public, must be knowledgeable about what is going on in Pitt County
- availability and accessibility of Clerk to the Board and staff is important
- be able to diffuse situations successfully
- provide deadlines on travel arrangements

Clerk's Expectations of Board:

- inform Clerk of meeting the rest of the Board might be interested in
- respond to needs for information/preferences in timely way
- respond to needs for information
- come directly to Clerk with problem - don't wait until Board meeting
- appreciate Board not bringing problem of Manager to Clerk

Expectations of County Attorney:

- be completely knowledgeable on legal issues facing county and Board's decision
- be diplomatic when you have to challenge the Board
- do whatever necessary to get information to Board, by having authority to get it from other law firms if assistance is needed
- prevent lawsuits from going to court if possible by giving good and timely advice to Board and departments
- tell Board when it is wrong even when the Board does not want to hear it

Attorney's Expectation of Board:

- if a commissioner knows of a constituent concern, let me know so we can research it before it's aired in public
- come directly to attorney with concerns for assistance

UPON MOTION by Commissioner Hammond, seconded by Commissioner Gaskins, the Board voted to adjourn the meeting at 12:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan J. Banks, CMC

Clerk to the Board