

**PITT COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
GREENVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA
SEPTEMBER 24, 2001 MINUTES**

The Pitt County Board of Commissioners met on Monday, September 24, 2001, at 9:00 AM in the Commissioners' Auditorium, Pitt County Office Building, 1717 W. 5th Street, Greenville, North Carolina.

Commissioners present:

Tom Coulson, Commissioner
Randy Royal, Commissioner
Glenn Bowen, Vice Chairman
Eugene James, Commissioner
Mark Owens, Commissioner
Beth Ward, Commissioner
David Hammond, Chairman
Terry Shank, Commissioner
Tom Johnson, Commissioner

Staff present:

Tom Robinson, County Manager
JoAnne Burgdorff, County Attorney
Susan J. Banks, Clerk to the Board
John Bulow, Assistant County Manager

Call to Order

Chairman Hammond called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Invocation and Pledge

The invocation was offered by Chairman Hammond.
The Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag was led by Commissioner Coulson.

Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve agenda.

Motion made by Commissioner Terry Shank.

Motion seconded by Commissioner Beth Ward.

Vote Record:

Tom Coulson	Yes
Beth Ward	Yes
Randy Royal	Yes
David Hammond	Yes
Glenn Bowen	Yes
Terry Shank	Yes
Eugene James	Yes
Tom Johnson	Yes
Mark Owens	Yes

Total Yes Votes: 9

Total No Votes: 0
Motion Passed

Items for Decision

Establish and Adoption of Goals for Staff

Summary of Information

Chairman Hammond stated that the purpose of this meeting was for the Board of Commissioners to set goals for the three appointed staff members. Chairman Hammond said that Ms. Banks has been Clerk for thirteen years, Mr. Robinson has been Manager for eight years, and Ms. Burgdorff has been County Attorney for five years. Chairman Hammond stated that he did not see how the Board could set goals and priorities without interacting with these individuals on a daily basis. He said he does not understand what the members of this Board want to do in this process. He said this Board only interacts with this staff on a part-time basis and staff would be able to evaluate these persons better since they interact with them on a daily basis.

Commissioner Ward said the Board has evaluated these people before and thought that the process would be in place for each year. It did not get put on the agenda for one reason or another. She asked that the staff be allowed to do the evaluations, share their strategies and goals with the Board and then the Board members can add items, as needed. Evaluation rating sheets have been attached to what the staff has supplied for the Board. She suggested the commissioners individually rank the staff and then share the information with staff. Chairman Hammond said they have met and decided on raises in the past. Chairman Hammond said the Manager interacts with all of the staff and the staff should evaluate him. Commissioner Shank said it is the Board's responsibility to hire and evaluate the Manager, Clerk and Attorney. In order to evaluate their performance, the Board needs to identify expectations prior to evaluating them in this coming year. It should be done annually. Commissioner James said he would like to give a lot of thought to the materials that the Board received this morning from staff. He said in order to make a fair judgment they should take the materials with them and study them.

Commissioner Royal said the Chairman or Board should appoint a management evaluation team and use the tools provided by staff to look at these positions and do an objective evaluation on what their jobs should consist of during the remainder of this year or June 30, whichever the Board decides. He said they could consider looking at how these people work at the end of this year and then at the next meeting, adopt a plan to follow. Commissioner Royal said if the Board has a professional way to do this then they will be able to have an ongoing process to follow for future reference. Commissioner Coulson said he was hoping for specifics from the Board. He provided the following comments about what he would like to see the staff doing:

Manager

1. To communicate to department heads and others in a non-intimidating fashion
2. To have conducted a yearly employee survey to evaluate the effectiveness of management
3. To establish a process where all county employees have yearly reviews, on or about their date of hire, explaining their performance, re-establish continuity with job descriptions, establish personal goals
4. To establish a formal sign-off procedure for all projects.
 - To go over those persons selected by the project champion to ensure everyone is considered
 - To periodically, at least three times during the duration of any project, hold a review with the project champion to verify acceptable progress is being made

- Sign-off's are recognized by all parties as certification of completeness of their actions and dispensement of their duties
5. To document in personnel files all instances of positive, or negative, performance for each employee
 6. To establish an aggressive cost savings program throughout county government, whereby meaningful savings can be realized and the employees responsible recognized and perhaps rewarded

County Attorney

1. Oversee and give legal opinion on ANY and ALL projects undertaken by any department in county government where a General Statute, law or Legislative action has governing authority, influence or in any other way controls or limits the county or commissioner actions
2. To understand, the county attorney's sign-off responsibility on these projects is Mandatory and NOT optional
3. Once signed, the project signatures are statements that full, final and complete legal advice has been given for the entire project

County Clerk

1. Responsibility to Board of Commissioners for all requests for information
2. To hold all discussions with commissioners in confidence
3. To issue a quarterly summary of all votes made by topic and vote history

Commissioner Ward asked for responsibilities by each staff member to be supplied to the Board as well as any other personal goals. She said at the last meeting, the commissioners said they would review performance in December of this year. She stated they should go home and look at the materials, follow up with discussion and then a review with staff be held in December.

Chairman Hammond said he did not want to micromanage the staff of the County. He said the Board should let the Manager determine whether staff meets objectives that are set out by the Board and measure performance of their duties.

Vice Chairman Bowen asked the Manager what was on the list presented by Commissioner Coulson that he was not already doing? Mr. Robinson said that he has not done a yearly survey of employees. Commissioner Bowen said that government employees should be fired if they are not doing their job, not just if they are doing something illegal.

Commissioner Johnson said he wanted to hear from the staff. He supported Commissioner Royal's suggestion to have a committee put the information in a form for later consideration.

Commissioner Shank **motioned** to have a committee of three commissioners appointed by the Board or Chairman to compile the information and bring to the Board as soon as possible, and then identify the process and goals to be evaluated in December. As far as the Manager's evaluation, they should complete the form with comments according to the discussed process. Commissioner Ward seconded the motion. Commissioner Bowen said he would vote against the motion because this is a nine-person board and he does not want a committee to do this work. He said he did not want other commissioners doing this work without the whole Board involved. Commissioner James said he was not supportive of using a committee for this project.

Commissioner Owens said he believes the Board understands the responsibility of the Clerk, Manager and Attorney. He said he does not believe anyone on the Board does not understand what's needed and that the issue is being clouded with this process. There is a five and ten year plan and this is an attempt to come back and get into mindsets of three people of this staff. He said this Board could not have one meeting in closed session before it was spread

to the public. He said he does not believe this Board should put any of this in writing. Each staff member should have an opportunity to stand before the Board, and before it becomes a public issue, they should come before the Board in private.

Chairman Hammond said the other two employees were not brought into question and were included in the process when it was the Manager was under consideration.

Commissioner Shank said the motion was to just compile the information, not to evaluate the staff. Commissioner Ward said when you hire staff, it is also your responsibility to evaluate them. There were no facts to justify concerns that the Board had taken into consideration. She said they hire and fire three staff people and it is their responsibility to evaluate them. She said it is difficult to look at just one of the staff members when all of them fall under the Board's responsibility.

Commissioner Ward said that the Board should identify areas that they would be looking at very closely in the future. The employees should have a ground-based evaluation done in December and then an evaluation done annually. Chairman Hammond asked what the Board would know following this process that they do not already know. Commissioner Ward said the Board has heard rumors and heresay but need to evaluate the staff annually.

Commissioner Johnson said every employee has a right to an annual evaluation.

Commissioner Coulson said he was concerned about the level of contention among staff, and lack of legal advise on the EMS tax matter. He said the Board was here to establish a process that would never allow that to happen again. He said he thought it would help for the Manager and Attorney to work together and operate in a productive manner.

The Board continued to discuss the process for evaluating the three Board appointed staff members.

Commissioner James needs to vote on motion. He said the County lost \$26,000 on the EMS matter and this mistake was the embarrassment to the County.

Commissioner Ward said the Board needs to let the Manager, Clerk and Attorney know their response to the evaluation forms. She said the manager has not been evaluated based on the form. She said the Board needs to vote on a motion to put every rating down and compile information and use as a base for evaluation.

Chairman Hammond called for a vote on the motion. In favor of the motion were: Commissioner Ward, Commissioner Royal, Commissioner Shank, and Commissioner Johnson. Opposed to the motion were: Chairman Hammond, Commissioner Bowen, Commissioner Owens, Commissioner James and Commissioner Coulson. The motion failed with a four to five vote.

Mr. Robinson said he would like to have a written evaluation that would address issues between the Board and the Manager. It is important to have a collective thought from nine commissioners because each has individual commissioner has different perspectives and sometimes there are conflicts between the commissioners. Mr. Robinson would like a collective thought from the Board. He informed the Board that all county employees currently have a written evaluation done on an annual basis.

Chairman Hammond spoke about the closed session and questioned how the information about what went on in closed session got out to the media or public.

Commissioner Shank **motioned** to have each commissioner fill out evaluation forms on the Manager, Clerk and Attorney and have the Clerk compile the forms and return to the

information to the Board as soon as possible. Commissioner Ward seconded the motion. She mentioned that they had no form on the attorney. Ms. Burgdorff stated she would provide information to the Board with an evaluation form.

Commissioner Bowen offered an **amendment** to the motion which would not require all of the commissioners to fill out the forms. Commissioner Ward said she has been told that this is a commission and a body that represents the County. Their job is to evaluate these three appointed people. Chairman Hammond said he wants individual opinions. Mr. Robinson said if there are differences then take the differences and resolve the conflicts so staff can get uniform direction from the Board. Commissioner James said he agreed with the amendment and would fill out an evaluation honestly. He said if a commissioner does not want to fill out one of the evaluation forms, then that would be their own decision. Commissioner Coulson seconded the motion on the condition that it would be noted which commissioners did not participate in the evaluations. The **motion** with the amendment passed unanimously.

Mr. Robinson made an announcement on Mr. Holt's behalf to inform the Board that the County would be broadcasting on Channel 13 the Crimestoppers Telethon on Saturday, September 29 and Sunday, September 30.

Contract for Billing on Rescue Services

Chairman Hammond said he was not clear on the vendor contract for billing on rescue services. Mr. Hammond asked what are the rescue calls or what the percentage of fees for compensation would be paid to the contractor. Mr. John Bulow, Assistant Manager, said that the corporation would be paid \$8 per call for each call billed. He stated that seven out of ten rescue squads in Pitt County are already using this company for their billing. The EMS Advisory Committee recommended this vendor. Chairman Hammond said there was no oversight of the rescue squads. Mr. Bulow said once a trip sheet is forwarded to the County on a valid call and response for service has been provided, then those sheets will be turned over to be billed. Mr. Bulow said he would be glad to bring this contract back to the Board meeting on October 1 for review. Chairman Hammond said he wanted information now because the Clerk has the document and is waiting for his signature. Mr. Bobby Joyner was called to come up to the meeting.

Short break was held while Mr. Joyner could be called to the meeting.

Chairman Hammond asked about the seven rescue squads that are currently using Southern Credit Corporation to collect for rescue calls. He said he wanted to be clear that every time a rescue call is made and they transport a person, the company will receive \$8.00 per call. Mr. Bobby Joyner, Emergency Services Coordinator stated that Eastern Pines, Fountain and Grifton are the three squads that are not currently using this company. After January 1, all the squads in Pitt County but the City of Greenville will use this service. Chairman Hammond said he did not see how it would benefit Pitt County. Bobby Joyner said each squad does their own billing and this would unify the billing system. He informed the Board that this committee will be bringing guidelines for each rescue squad to the Board for consideration. Mr. Joyner said a squad has been taking itself out of service every month and the people are not receiving services.

Mr. Joyner said there is enough money next year to fund rescue and provide the same level of service and every section will be treated the same. He said the County is in a big transition period for rescue and EMS services. Commissioner Owens asked Mr. Joyner to work with the squad with problems and not to drive them away.

Mr. Robinson said the committee would be bringing a recommendation for a collection policy and write off procedures back to the Board and the Board will set the policy.

Adjourn

Motion:

Commissioner James motioned, seconded by Commissioner Shank to adjourn the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Vote Record:

Tom Coulson

Beth Ward

Randy Royal

David Hammond

Glenn Bowen

Terry Shank

Eugene James

Tom Johnson

Mark Owens

Respectfully submitted,

Susan J. Banks, CMC
Clerk to the Board