

**MINUTES OF BOARD OF COUNTY
COMMISSIONERS
OF GUILFORD COUNTY**

Greensboro, North Carolina
January 16-17, 2014

The Board of County Commissioners met in a duly noticed special meeting on January 16-17, 2014 for the Board's Annual Retreat. The Retreat was held at the Wilson School of Commerce on High Point University's campus.

PRESENT: Chairman Bill Bencini, presiding; Vice Chairman Hank Henning; Commissioners Jeff Phillips, Bruce Davis, Carolyn Q. Coleman, Kay Cashion, Linda O. Shaw, Alan Branson, and Raymond Trapp.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Marty Lawing, County Manager; Mark Payne, County Attorney; Robin Keller, Clerk to the Board; Michael Halford, Budget Director; Bonnie Stellfox, Purchasing Director; Delanie Poteat, Interim Property Management Director; Jim Albright, Emergency Services Director; Ben Chavis, Tax Director; John Dean, Human Resources Director; Merle Green, Public Health Director; Paul Lowe, Deputy Clerk to the Board; Katredia Martin, Executive Administrative Officer; Robert Williams, DSS Director; Alex Ashton, Open Space Planner; Thomas Marshburn, Guilford County Parks; and members of the media and community.

Welcome

Chairman Bill Bencini brought the meeting to order at 9:20 AM. Bencini thanked High Point University Chief of Staff Christopher Dudley and University President Dr. Nido R. Oubein for allowing the utilization of their fine facility and warm hospitality.

Opening Remarks

Mr. Lawing, County Manager, thanked all of the County staff including the Clerk's Office, Budget Office, administrative staff, and department heads for helping with putting together the retreat.

Lawing pointed out that the County's seal featured the words Courage and Faith.

Lawing stated that planning is essential to the success of a business to ensure that dreams and goals are met. Lawing reviewed various demographics regarding poverty. Lawing shared that the City of Greensboro had a poverty rate of 20%, which is higher than the national average. Lawing

commented that the County's tax base is relatively flat and went on to discuss maintaining the County's triple A credit rating will become increasingly difficult in the future.

Review of Mission and Vision Statements

Lawing reviewed the County's current Vision and Mission statements which were adopted in 2008. Lawing suggested that the County's values should be revised due to their age and could be tailored to match community held values and beliefs.

Commissioner Davis spoke to the history of how the current Vision and Mission statements were developed.

Chairman Bencini asked Lawing to review the documents and provide recommendations to update them if necessary.

Lawing stated that he would develop draft alternations and bring them back to the Board for consideration.

Commissioner Coleman stated that the County's strategic plan had helped to develop the Vision and Mission statement in the past. Coleman suggested that any alternations to the documents should include diversity as a component of the County's Vision and Mission.

Commissioner Cashion commented that developing core operational values would be a long term endeavor and suggested a work session could be held to discuss the issue.

Lawing stated that the County should develop unique values to guide the County in the future. Lawing commented that as the most current strategic was completed in 2006 new data would be needed, if the plan was to be utilized in developing new Vision and Mission statements. Lawing suggested that including organizational values in the updated documents would be an important consideration.

Commissioner Davis commented that community and organizational values should be blended into the new documents. Davis stated that he thought the updated Vision and Mission statements should be featured on the County's website.

Lawing stated that there were some opportunities to promote such innovation and collaboration.

Commissioner Trapp echoed the need for community goals to be included in the development process.

Commissioner Davis thought that statistics included in the strategic plan could be updated. Davis suggested that the County's annual Citizens Academy could play a role in improving the Vision and Mission statements.

Commissioner Cashion spoke to the work completed by the last three academies and the priorities that they identified. Cashion stated that former Citizen Academy participants have shared their interest in assisting the County with future projects.

Lawing shared his thoughts on moving forward with a revised strategic plan.

Chairman Bencini recommended having a community group with one person appointed by each commissioner would be a good strategy to ensure a diverse set of perspectives are included in the updated plan.

Commissioner Coleman stated that succession planning would be a valuable component to include.

Commissioner Trapp suggested using technology, especially social media, to solicit citizen input.

The Board discussed proposed alternations to the Vision and Mission statements.

Review of Preliminary General Fund Revenue Projections

Lawing reviewed expected property tax revenues and reflected that it would be a good year- as revenues were ahead of projections.

Lawing discussed motor vehicle property tax revenues and the benefit of the state's new collection system which is yielding a higher collection rate for the County.

Commissioner Phillips asked for clarification regarding collection rates.

Mr. Halford, Budget Director, discussed that the difference in the percentage point is roughly one to two million dollars, but still reflects a net positive effect for the County.

Halford shared that excluding motor vehicles, the County has collected 94% of taxes versus 93% during last fiscal year. Halford stated that he was optimistic that the County could increase its collection rate back to 98%. Halford commented that the County may see potentially an eight million dollar increase in revenues due to the improving economy.

Halford stated that early estimates show the County should increase property tax revenues between \$5.6 and \$6 million this fiscal year.

Mr. Halford went on to review sales tax revenues. Halford shared that the County is trending slightly above budgeted amounts for the current fiscal year. Halford stated that the increase in the level of collected County sales taxes was encouraging.

Commissioner Coleman questioned how the elimination of sales tax holidays impacted County finances.

Mr. Halford reported that they have not been able to retain that information from the State. Halford stated that he thought the school tax holiday did not have much of an impact on the County's bottom line. Halford shared that the County's retail sales were still under pre-recession levels, though Halford noted that retail sales were increasing gradually.

Chairman Bencini questioned if there were any figures regarding the impact of internet sales and purchases on County coffers.

Halford shared that his office did not collect data on that level. Halford commented that usually sales taxes are collected by the State and distributed back to localities.

Commissioner Coleman expressed concerns regarding the State's decision to remove the tax holidays.

Mr. Lawing commented that the change was most likely instituted to strengthen and stabilize the State's budget.

Halford reviewed the financial projections assuming the improving economy. Halford stated that the County should realize a three million dollar increase in sales tax revenue during the current fiscal year. Halford summarized that he projected County general revenues to increase by nine million dollars.

Commissioner Phillips asked for clarification regarding the increase in the EMS transportation revenues.

Mr. Albright, Emergency Services Director, shared that their call volume increased exponentially this year; however the operating costs associated with the program had also increased as a result.

CIP Investment Plan

Lawing clarified to the Board that the information he provided to Commissioners regarding the CIP investment plan was not a final recommendation, but rather a listing of the requests which had been submitted by staff.

Casey Smith, Senior Budget & Management Analyst, reviewed the CIP process with the Board. Smith shared that requests were composed of two sections: large technology requests and brick and mortar requests. Mr. Smith reviewed the CIP projects which were implemented last year. Smith commented that the majority of CIP projects were related to education. Smith also reviewed proposed CIP projects and the level of County held debt.

Commissioner Davis asked for clarification regarding the proposed 800 MHz upgrades.

Halford clarified that the program had been approved. Halford clarified that the individual capital project ordinances for each of the phases of the proposed upgrade had not yet been established.

Smith stated that the project has come in under budget because the project has been implemented in phases and has been well managed.

Mr. Smith went on to review the County's proposed funding priorities which included making improvements at various EMS bases and constructing the Law Enforcement Special Operations Facility. Mr. Smith discussed the staffs' desire for transparency and the subsequent utilization of a Capital Projects Dashboard which had been recently developed. Smith shared that the project was a joint effort between Budget staff and the IS Department and would be placed on the County's website when it was complete.

Break at 11:00 AM.

Back in Session at 11:17 AM.

Lawing suggested that the County could manage CIP proposals more efficiently by grouping and scheduling similar projects. Lawing also commented that the County should start developing a pay-go fund to finance future CIP projects.

Mr. Halford reviewed potential strategies to fund CIP projects in the future.

Mr. Baker, Finance Director, spoke regarding rating agencies recommendations for having a mix of pay-go projects and budgeted funds. Baker also commented on methods to fund CIP projects. Baker suggested that the County could set up a CIP fund to help finance future projects. Baker expounded on his proposal- stating that after funds were deposited in the County's fund balance account, then the remaining revenues could be diverted to the CIP fund. Mr. Baker shared that the County's current percentage maintained is 8% which is the lowest allowable amount by the North Carolina Local Government Commission.

Mr. Baker shared that the County's fund balance rate has floated from 9.1% up to 10% in the past few fiscal years.

Mr. Halford reviewed additional options for funding CIP projects. Halford suggested that the County should develop a fund to help pay for future CIP projects. Halford stated that the County should set a goal to distribute two million dollars to the CIP development fund.

Commissioner Phillips expressed concerns with the value of the County's current fund balance. Phillips spoke in favor of developing a fund to pay for future CIP projects.

Commissioner Cashion echoed the concerns regarding the County's fund balance. Cashion suggested that increases in sales taxes revenues could be diverted to build up the level of the fund balance.

Commissioner Davis expressed concerns with developing a higher fund balance. Davis commented that building a more generous fund balance could impact County services. Davis

shared that he could support growing the fund balance to 15%, but would like to understand any potential impacts to County service delivery.

Chairman Bencini asked how the County's fund balance policy affects its bond rating.

Baker stated that the County's fund balance is quite important. Baker shared that credit agencies consider an organization's liquidity when determining its bond rating.

Chairman Bencini asked if there was a certain fund balance percentage threshold that rating agencies preferred.

Baker commented that there is not a specific fund balance level that agencies recommend. Baker shared that the average fund balance for peer counties was about 12%.

Guilford County Schools and GTCC Bond Projects

Mr. Baker reviewed the Guilford County Schools and GTCC Bond Projects. Baker shared that staying within budget for the current fiscal year would be a challenge, but he thought the County could maintain existing contractual obligations without issuing additional bond debt.

Mr. Baker elaborated on the positive outcomes if the County is able to make it through the end of the fiscal year within existing bond funds.

Mr. Baker reviewed approved school improvements projects.

Debt Service Projections

Baker reviewed the County's level of outstanding debt. Baker shared that the majority of County held debt, about 85%, was related to education. Baker then reviewed the various components which made up the County's debt. Baker reviewed several scenarios regarding bond issuances and debt repayment schedules.

Commissioner Phillips asked for clarification regarding current projects.

Baker shared that the County could complete all approved current projects for about \$52 million.

Commissioner Phillips expressed concerns regarding the County incurring additional debt.

Baker provided insights regarding amortization schedules.

Discussion of School Funding Formula

Mr. Lawing stated that the Education Committee chaired by Vice Chairman Henning has been studying various school funding formulas. Lawing shared that the Committee has narrowed down their review to about four formulas for the full Board to consider.

Vice Chairman Henning shared that the purpose of the Committee's discussions was to develop a funding system which is more stable, predictable, and fair. Henning discussed the current process for allocating resources to GTCC and the School System. Henning commented that the Committee would like to implement a process which provides funding to meet the School System's needs while keeping the County fiscally solvent.

Commissioner Coleman expressed concerns about the proposed changes. Coleman stated that she was unaware of the conversations regarding the various funding formulas. Coleman asked in the future for meeting schedules to be better distributed- so that all Commissioners could participate in developing policy positions. Coleman expressed her frustration that the whole Board was not included in the conversations regarding the school funding issue.

Mr. Lawing reviewed a report which compared Guilford County's school funding allocation to other counties Statewide.

Commissioner Davis questioned who developed the report.

Mr. Payne, County Attorney, shared that the report was completed by the Public School Forum of North Carolina. Payne stated that the Forum is an institution which conducts research on school funding levels in North Carolina.

Mr. Halford reviewed the proposed formulas with Commissioners. Halford shared that the majority of counties in North Carolina do not utilize funding formulas- though it was a growing trend. Halford stated that any formula adopted by the Board should take into consideration the County's ability to pay.

Commissioner Cashion asked for clarification regarding the projected growth in County's student population.

Commissioner Davis left the meeting at 12:40 PM.

Mr. Halford stated that the projected growth rate accounted for both public and charter schools.

The Board further discussed the various components of each formula.

Commissioner Phillips expressed concerns about the growing County debt and the political horsemanship which is apart of the current school funding allocation process.

Chairman Bencini reviewed the various school funding formulas.

Commissioner Coleman asked when the Board would hear from the School Systems.

Commissioner Henning spoke to the Committee's efforts to review the various school funding formulas. Henning shared that the Committee had been in communication with Guilford County Schools. Henning stated that School Board staff members had even attended one of the Committee's meetings. Henning stated that the next step would be to select a formula and maintain the open dialogue with School Board staff during the budget development process.

Commissioner Coleman expressed concerns with hearing feedback from School Board staff.

Commissioner Phillips commended staff for their work in preparing the data for the Committee.

Welcome to High Point University Campus

Dr. Nido Qubein welcomed the Commissioners to the campus of High Point University. Qubein thanked the Board for their time and efforts in representing the community.

Commissioner Davis returned 1:07 PM.

Qubein stated that the American flag is featured prominently throughout the campus. Qubein commented that this design feature was intentional as it was the University's goal to stress the importance of patriotism and service to its students.

Qubein shared that his hopes are that all Guilford County citizens can work more closely together to address regional issues.

Qubein presented Chairman Bencini with a Key to the University for his contributions and service to the citizens of Guilford County.

Chairman Bencini thanked Dr. Qubein for hosting the Board of Commissioners.

Employee Wellness

John Dean, Human Resource Director, stated that his goal was to maintain a healthy workforce by providing a structured wellness program.

Carol Campbell, Benefits Manager, shared that the County has spent about \$15.6 million dollars on health care claims during the current fiscal year. Campbell stated that the County had a lot of room for growth in developing a full functioning wellness program.

Campbell shared that she had conducted research on various active wellness programs. Campbell reviewed her findings with the Board. Campbell stated that efficiencies could be obtained by conducting in-house drug testing.

Chairman Bencini stated that he appreciated the Ms. Campbell's work and initiative.

Commissioner Coleman asked for clarification regarding drug testing of County employees.

Campbell stated that drug screens are standard for pre-employment reviews. Campbell also shared that the County had a random drug testing program.

Lawing shared that the next step in the process is to request proposals from various firms to assist the County with developing a wellness program.

Commissioner Coleman asked for clarification regarding the level of staffing at the proposed clinic.

Lawing shared that there were various models that could be implemented. Lawing stated that some clinics are staffed with nurse practitioners- while others utilize physicians.

The Board recessed for lunch at 1:30 PM.

The Board reconvened at 2:10 PM.

Update on Classification and Compensation Study

Matt Reece with the Piedmont Triad Regional Council of Governments (PTRCOG) provided an update to the Board on the status of the pay classification study.

Commissioner Davis in at 2:12 PM.

Mr. Reece reported that PTRCOG staff are preparing to begin interviews with Sheriff's office and are getting ready to begin the data collection phase. Reece stated that he was pleased to report that the project is making good progress and is still anticipated to be completed on time.

Commissioner Branson asked for clarification regarding when the project would be completed.

Reece shared that the project is scheduled to be completed by April 2014.

Lawing reviewed a handout regarding the project with Commissioners.

Commissioner Davis out at 2:14 PM.

Rural/Volunteer Fire Department Goals and Objectives

Lawing stated that the County's volunteer fire departments are having difficulties attracting and retaining volunteers. Lawing shared that his goal was to bring all the County's fire departments together to learn more about their most pressing issues.

Jim Albright, Emergency Services Director, shared the County is served by twenty three fire districts and nineteen fire departments. Albright commented that the various departments are not County staff. Albright stated that all departments are impacted by annexation.

Chris Johnson, Fire Chief for the Town of Summerfield, presented on behalf of the County's Rural Fire Departments. Mr. Johnson reviewed the estimated cost savings to the county for contracting out fire protection to the various rural departments. Johnson also shared that volunteer fire departments respond to a greater variety of calls than they did in the past.

Johnson reported that the three primary concerns for the County's volunteer fire departments included: 1) Record Management System; 2) Additional Manpower Vehicle; and 3) Safety/OSHA Support.

Commissioner Branson shared that ensuring security is a top priority. Branson stated that if the Board was interested in encouraging economic growth in the rural sections of the County, then the Board would have to consider providing more staffing, equipment, and resources to the rural fire departments.

Vice Chairman Henning asked what the Board could do immediately to handle the Fire Chiefs concerns.

Albright shared that the various departments need assistance with central data management as well as additional personnel.

Vice Chairman Henning asked for clarity on how urgent the fire departments request was.

Lawing stated that he wanted to receive Board feedback regarding the needs of the various fire departments. Lawing commented improvements could be implemented jointly with contracted service agencies.

Vice Chairman Henning expressed interest in moving forward with addressing the needs of the fire departments. Henning wanted to ensure the departments' needs were integrated in the budget.

Commissioner Phillips stated that having the departments' needs quantified would be helpful in preparing the County's budget. Phillips asked if existing County IT staff could assist with making the technical improvements at the various fire departments.

Commissioner Coleman asked if all the Commissioners had reviewed the fire study report. Coleman asked if the report could be redistributed to the Board.

Commissioner Trapp asked which components would improve County ISO ratings.

Johnson stated that increasing staffing levels would help to improve ISO ratings.

Chairman Bencini thanked the County Fire Service staff for their service and participation.

Review of County Economic Development Incentives

Lawing shared that the current guidelines had not been modified since 2008. Lawing reviewed the current policy with the Board.

Commissioner Davis back 2:29 PM.

Lawing stated that the County's existing incentive policy had a fairly low investment threshold.

Lawing commented that Deputy Clerk to the Board Paul Lowe had conducted research on economic incentive policies. Lawing stated after reviewing the data that Wake County had the most intriguing approach. According to Lawing, Wake County sets its initial capital investment for new firms very high at \$100 million dollars or more- while existing firms must invest at least \$50 million.

Lawing stated that Mr. Bell, Planning & Development Director, had conducted research on his behalf and found that roughly one hundred properties were valued at over ten million dollars. Lawing shared that thirty eight of these facilities were owned by tax exempt entities.

Commissioner Shaw stated that she wanted to let citizens know that firms must meet certain guidelines before being awarded incentive funds.

Lawing reviewed the various incentive guidelines. Lawing stated that the majority of the programs had components for both job creation and new capital investment.

Commissioner Coleman commented that the focus should be on job creation. Coleman stated that job creation creates more long term positive effects in the community. Coleman shared that new jobs help to create wealth and increases commercial demand in the County.

Lawing stated that he asked Mr. Bell to compile research on previous incentive awards.

Bell reported that his data shows that the average economic development project in the County created 189 new jobs and generated about \$208 million in new capital investment. Bell shared that the average incentive grant awarded was about \$128,500.

Commissioner Trapp asked how successful the Board has been in advocating for minority hiring practices among firms who received economic incentive grants from the County.

Lawing stated that level of data had not been compiled and retained by County staff. Lawing shared in the past, minority hiring practices was not addressed in the any County incentive policy.

Payne, County Attorney, informed the Board that the County had not previously included this requirement in the incentive agreement. Payne shared that any reporting that has been completed over the years has been shared voluntarily.

Commissioner Trapp asked if the County could legally ask firms to comply with this standard.

Payne stated that the agreement could be altered to require firms to have policies to promote minority workforce development.

Bell shared that if all prior economic incentives are taken into account, the County has spent about \$9.00 per resident to promote economic development.

Commissioner Phillips expressed concerns regarding the required reporting requirements for firms who receive economic incentive grants. Phillips stated that he was aware of a firm which alerted him that they were not required to submit any paperwork regarding grant requirements. Phillips recommended tightening the current incentive policy- to add additional layers of oversight to the process.

Commissioner Cashion stated that the County has asked firms to address minority hiring for years, but has not received much in the way of data from businesses. Cashion commented that the economic development incentive policy should be altered- to increase the level of oversight.

Lawing shared that the County could place some of the proposed provisions into future incentive agreements moving forward. Lawing stated that a better tracking system is currently being designed by County staff.

Payne commented that firms might be sensitive to making internal progress reports available to the public. Payne suggested that such firms would be more willing to share such information with County staff.

Davis shared that he appreciated Lawing's explanation of the County's improving tracking system. Davis stated that he agreed that the current monitoring could be improved. Davis reminded the Board that claw-back provisions are currently in place to ensure that firms meet the County's incentive guidelines. Davis commented that the incentive policy is a development tool and not a hand out. Davis thought it was important for Commissioners to remember the difference.

Lawing asked the Board for feedback regarding the various incentive policies.

Chairman Bencini commented that he would defer to staff to develop recommendations and bring them back to the Board to review and consider.

Vice Chairman Henning asked the staff to research some of the incentive programs which were aimed at encouraging lower intensity development.

Lawing asked if the Board wanted to review a plan which worked to encourage large scale industry development-as well as- small business/commercial development

Chairman Bencini thought it was important to have a policy which was flexible- which could respond to both categories of interested firms.

Commissioner Branson shared that he preferred the County focus on larger scale projects. Branson stated he also supported implementing tighter monitoring and oversight controls.

Chairman Bencini urged the Board to consider using existing County resources.

Lauren Hill, with the City of High Point suggested that the County's existing economic development incentive policy was too long and complex.

Lawing shared that Wake County's policy is one page.

Commissioner Cashion stated that the public understand jobs. Cashion commented that job creation should be the focus of the County's economic development efforts.

Commissioner Coleman shared that the County should hire an economic development director. Coleman stated that the County previously had a staff of four dedicated to encouraging development.

Lawing commented that Leslie Bell, Director of Planning and Development, will be leading the economic development efforts of the County.

Commissioner Trapp asked Lawing if his research identified any counties which provided funding and development assistance to small businesses.

Lawing stated that some in the State had. Lawing commented that those organizations were identified in the research which was compiled by County staff.

Commissioner Phillips stated that he favored a policy which aimed to expand the tax base. Phillips suggested that the term of the grant award payout be shortened. Phillips also supported initiatives which promoted small business development.

Lawing cautioned the Board on shortening the implementation period.

Commissioner Phillips commented that the County should develop a policy which is flexibility.

The Board discussed the various options and reviewed some of the past incentives and their relative successes/failures. The Board discussed opportunities for assisting existing businesses.

Report on Veteran's Resource Center

Commissioner Davis introduced the Board of the Carolina Field of Honor. Davis thanked the Board of Commissioners for their tremendous leadership regarding the project. Davis shared an article from US Airways magazine spotlighting the project.

Davis commented that he appreciated the Board's respect for the service men and women of our country. Davis presented a ceremonial check to the Board of the Carolina Field of Honor in the amount of \$250,000, which reflected the County's contribution. Davis introduced various members of the War Memorial Foundation Board who thanked the Commissioners for their contribution and spoke to the Memorial and the impact it will have on the community. Mr. Bill Moss shared that he thought the Memorial will have a profound impact on the economic- as the many visitors will be drawn to the new attraction. Mr. Moss stated that the facility will be one of the largest veteran's memorials on the east coast outside of Washington DC. Moss informed the Board that the project will be completed on May 31, 2014. The Memorial will hold a grand opening ceremony on Memorial Day at 4:00 PM at Triad Park.

Commissioner Shaw personally thanked Commissioner Davis for all of his hard work on the project.

Commissioner Davis presented an update to the Board regarding Operation Role Call. Davis commented on the growing problems which veterans face including unemployment and homelessness. Davis stated that a living memorial for veterans should be established in Guilford County. Davis reported that there are about 100,000 veterans who reside in the Triad, including approximately 553 homeless veterans. Davis asked the Board to entertain his proposal to use an abandoned County owned building in High Point to operate as a facility to assist homeless veterans. Davis commented that the property would provide housing for veterans and their families as well as retraining programs. Davis stated that a business proposal had been developed which had been vetted by an accounting firm. Davis shared that the proposed proposal had been spearheaded by the War Memorial Foundation.

Davis stated that in his proposal the facility would be leased to the War Memorial Foundation which would act as the property manager for the site. Davis reviewed the goals and the aspirations of the Center and urged the Board to support the proposal.

Report on the Family Crisis/Justice Resource Center

Commissioner Cashion introduced the proposal. Cashion explained to the Board the agencies and programs that would work from the Center to provide services to victims of domestic abuse. Cashion shared that these would representatives from Cone Health, Guilford County DSS, the Greensboro Police Department, and the Guilford County Sheriff's office. Cashion stated that she has been working with Commissioners Ray Trapp, Jeff Phillips, and Vice Chairman Hank Henning on a Committee to study the issue. Cashion reviewed the costs associated with developing the Center and informed the Board that only one new position would be needed to provide staffing.

Commissioner Cashion thanked Robert Williams, DSS Director, for his assistance in developing the Center. Cashion shared that DSS would be committing staff resources to the project.

Lawing spoke to the various funding options which were available to support the program. Mr. Halford reviewed the costs associated with renovating the facility on Greene Street which would house the new Center. Halford recommended diverting funds from the current facilities projects fund to pay for the renovations. Regarding the new position needed at the Center, Halford stated that funds should be used from the Manager's contingency fund should be utilized.

Commissioner Cashion asked the Board if they had any particular preferences regarding the exact funding stream which would be utilized for the project.

Commissioner Phillips stated that he would defer to the recommendations of County staff. Phillips asked Mr. Williams if staff could be effectively transferred to the site.

Mr. Williams commented that the staff which is slated to transfer to the new facility already works on issues regarding domestic abuse and counseling and would be well suited to work at the Center. Williams also stated that DSS could help install new technology at the facility.

Commissioner Phillips asked regarding Cone Health's participation in the project.

Commissioner Cashion reported that a forensic nurse would be on call to respond to cases of domestic abuse. Cashion commented that additional facilities would be needed at the facility to house this service.

Commissioner Coleman asked if the City of Greensboro was contributing any funding to the project.

Commissioner Cashion reported that no funds from the City had been committed to the project. Cashion stated that she was hopeful that the City could provide funding to help operate the Center.

Motion was made by Commissioner Linda O. Shaw to authorize Staff to immediately proceed with program implementation, securing necessary staff as identified and completion building renovations/repairs as indicated above. Furthermore, authorize staff to develop memorandum of understanding with other partnering agencies; authorize staff to transfer identified funding to cover the approved costs and any other necessary actions to secure the success of the initial program implementation within the next six months, which was seconded by Commissioner Ray Trapp.

VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.
AYES: Commissioners C. Coleman, L. Shaw, B. Davis, H. Henning, R. Trapp, A. Branson, J. Phillips, B. Bencini.
NOES: None.
ABSTAIN: Commissioner K. Cashion.

Commissioner Phillips thanked Commissioner Cashion for her efforts regarding the Center.

Update on the Evans Blount Clinic

Merle Green, Public Health Director, stated that the Evans Blount Clinic provides primary care services to Southeast Greensboro. Green shared that the Clinic has been a great success to date. Green commented that the County provided \$250,000 in seed funding to develop the Clinic. Green shared that the facility operates as a public-private partnership and is open Monday-Friday as well as two Saturdays a month. Green commented that the Clinic sees about 10,000 patients annually. Green then reviewed common ailments treated at the facility.

Commissioner Trapp asked why the Clinic was having difficulties attracting a nurse practitioner.

Green stated that as the entity staffing the clinic was provided through a private provider- the benefit package offered to personnel at the Clinic were less rich than local hospitals and local governments. Green also shared that the Clinic competes with other local medical providers for the best talent.

Commissioner Trapp shared constituent concerns regarding the level of service provided at the Clinic.

Green stated that the sole physician at the Clinic sees about forty patients a day. Green commented as no patient is turned away from the facility, Clinic staff can become overwhelmed. Green suggested that adding staff at the facility would alleviate wait times and improve service.

Commissioner Cashion asked if the recent reopening of Health Serv would help with the overcrowding at the Clinic.

Green stated that alternation would help to improve patient outcomes in the County.

Commissioner Cashion commended Commissioner Coleman for her efforts to open the Clinic.

Commissioner Coleman advised staff to ensure that patients receive the highest level of care.

Green informed the Board that Public Health does have the funding to hire a nurse practitioner which would help offset the volume.

Disparity Study Request

Mr. Lawing shared that back in September the Board of Education (BOE) held a retreat and discussed completing a disparity study. Lawing commented that the BOE requested that the County participate in the study. Lawing stated that Mr. Green made a presentation to the Education Committee regarding the issue. Lawing reported that the BOE informed the Education Committee that the review would cost about \$200,000. Lawing shared that the City of Greensboro completed a Disparity Study in 2012.

Commissioner Coleman asked for clarity regarding the utility of completing a disparity study.

Payne, County Attorney, stated that there was no legal requirement for a unit of government to complete a disparity study. Payne commented that the goal of a disparity study is to identify the pool of contractors in a given area. Payne shared that after the pool of firms is established, goals can be developed to support minority owned businesses. Payne reported that a completed disparity study provides legal support for operating a MWBE program.

Commissioner Coleman shared that she wanted to see more MWBE firms be involved with County purchasing and contracting.

Commissioner Davis asked what would be the advantage to the County by participating in the Study.

Tammie Hall, MWBE Coordinator for Guilford County Schools, stated to operate a MWBE program an organization needs to set goals for minority business development. Hall commented that a disparity study helps to identify the available pool of talent in a community and assists organizations in setting MWBE participation rates. Hall shared that each unit of government which operates a MWBE program must implement a disparity study, which provides legal support and defense against lawsuits.

Commissioner Davis expressed concerns regarding the study. Davis stated that the County should save its limited resources and just do the right thing. Davis commented that he wanted to see minority firms receive more sizeable contracts from County funded construction projects.

Commissioner Trapp echoed similar concerns. Trapp shared that the City of Greensboro is on their second or third disparity study. Trapp stated that instead of funding costly studies the County should simply provide more support to MWBE firms.

Commissioner Branson pointed out that in contracting practice there is a good faith effort clause for MWBE participation. Branson asked Ms. Hall if she had any difficulties finding qualified MWBE contractors.

Ms. Hall reported that in her experience it depends on the trade. Hall commented that there is a deficit of MWBE firms in the mechanical trades.

Commissioner Coleman expressed concerns regarding the County's MWBE participation. Coleman stated that the County's participation rate had fallen to 3% from 27% when the new jail was being constructed. Coleman asked for clarification regarding the costs associated with study.

Ms. Hall indicated that the BOE does not have a cost analysis for including the County in the study.

Commissioner Coleman spoke to the potential cost benefits of collaborating on a joint study.

Commissioner Trapp asked for clarification regarding the legal constraints associated with operating a MWBE program.

Payne commented that the County's current MWBE coordinator is sufficient. Payne stated that a study is not the same thing as an insurance policy. Payne commented that a benefit of completing a disparity study is identifying the County's MWBE contractor pool.

Commissioner Phillips stated that he needed additional information before he could vote to commit County resources to the study.

Chairman Bencini left meeting at 5:10 PM.

Vice Chairman Henning, presiding shared that more research needed to be done on the issue.

Commissioner Coleman urged the Board to consider joining the study.

Commissioner Phillips commented that County resources may be better spent by addressing known recruitment and contracting issues.

Commissioner Shaw out at 5:30 PM.

The Board discussed the pros and cons of conducting a disparity study.

Commissioner Davis reiterated his desires for the Board to address the issue.

Commissioner Coleman expressed her support for a County-wide disparity study.

Commissioner Cashion asked if working with the BOE on the study would identify issues with County-wide purchasing and contracting operations.

Lawing stated that the County's scope would most likely need to be different- most likely necessitating a separate study.

Day 2- January 17, 2014- Guilford County Board of Commissioners Retreat

PRESENT: Chairman Bill Bencini, presiding; Vice Chairman Hank Henning; Commissioners Jeff Phillips, Bruce Davis, Carolyn Q. Coleman (arriving at 1:25 PM), Kay Cashion, Linda O. Shaw (arriving at 9:31 AM), Alan Branson, and Raymond Trapp.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Marty Lawing, County Manager; Mark Payne, County Attorney; Robin Keller, Clerk to the Board; Michael Halford, Budget Director; Bonnie Stellfox, Purchasing Director; Delanie Poteat, Interim Property Management Director; Ben Chavis, Tax Director; Merle Green, Public Health Director; Paul Lowe, Deputy Clerk to the Board; Katredia Martin, Executive Administrative Officer; Robert Williams, DSS Director; Alex Ashton, Open Space Planner; Thomas Marshburn, Parks Operations Manager; and members of the media and community.

Chairman Bencini called the meeting to order at 9:22 AM.

Direction Parks and Recreation Open Space Program

Lawing, County Manager, introduced Alex Ashton County Open Space Planner. Lawing informed the Board that Ashton's presentation would be an update from a November 2013 work session.

Ashton reviewed the status of the Open Space Program. Ashton reported that the land acquisition portion of the Program is winding down. Ashton stated that the Program is transitioning into a land stewardship operation.

Ashton updated the Board on the various projects which the Open Space Program has completed. Ashton stated that he was seeking Board input which would help to guide future development of the County's park preserves. Ashton shared that the following projects relating to the preserve lands still need to be completed: implementing master plans for each park, establishing a set of rules and regulations, and to design maintenance management plans.

Ashton discussed various plans to develop the County's preserve lands. Ashton shared that the Open Space Committee recommended the County appropriate \$10 million dollars over the next ten years to fund additional land acquisition to expand the County's preserve lands. Ashton stated that the Open Space Committee made a suggestion that the County use CIP funds to pay for the expansion of the preserve lands.

Commissioner Shaw in at 9:31 AM.

Vice Chairman Henning asked for clarification regarding how the proposed land acquisition program would be funded.

Halford, Budget Director, stated that a particular funding stream has not yet been identified.

Chairman Bencini asked how many County preserve properties had been gifted.

Ashton commented that one property had been completely gifted to the County. Ashton stated that many properties had been sold to the County at a discount. Ashton reported to the Board that he was working on a land acquisition deal in the Stokesdale area. Ashton stated that this parcel would complete a one mile section of trail.

Lawing informed the Board that this property was the only sale that is currently pending at this time. Lawing stated that after this sale is complete that the County is not actively pursuing any additional properties to add to the Open Space Program.

Commissioner Phillips asked how critical the parcel was to completing the trail corridor in Stokesdale. Phillips expressed concerns regarding the purchase. Phillips commented that the funds that were earmarked for the purchase could be used to pay for improvements at other County preserve properties.

Ashton stated that he was optimistic that additional funds could be raised through donations and grants to open the remaining preserve properties. Ashton commented that he supported completing the trail corridor in Stokesdale, but would defer to Open Space Committee for input.

Commissioner Phillip stated that he wanted to garner feedback from the Committee.

Commissioner Trapp asked regarding the Hines Chapel Preserve.

Ashton updated the Board regarding the status of the proposed incubator farm. Ashton stated that A&T University has expressed support for the project.

Commissioner Shaw asked regarding the Thomas Bus Preserve.

Ashton stated that the Preserve is located in High Point near Oak Hill Elementary.

Vice Chairman Henning expressed concerns regarding the implementation of the open space acquisition process.

Chairman Bencini echoed Vice Chairman Henning's concerns regarding future funding of the County preserve system.

Commissioner Shaw asked how much money was left over from the property acquisition fund. Shaw stated she wanted to ensure that the current preserve properties could be utilized by the citizens of Guilford County.

Ashton commented that his office did not have any operational funding set aside for preserve development. Ashton stated that he is currently pursuing partnerships with other agencies to ensure that the preserves are properly maintained.

Commissioner Phillips shared his support of the Richardson Taylor Preserve project. Phillips suggested that the Open Space Committee reconsider its offer to purchase the tract of land in Stokesdale. Phillips stated that the funds could be used to pay for implementing improvements at the various preserve properties.

Ashton commented that another option would be to pursue a trail easement. Ashton stated that this would be a cheaper option and would still complete the trails project in Stokesdale.

Commissioner Phillips shared that he preferred to parcels donated to the Open Space program.

Chairman Bencini stated that the County needed to be mindful of how it managed its limited financial resources.

Commissioner Trapp expressed his support regarding the proposed incubator farm project.

Commissioner Branson encouraged Ashton to reach out to Elon University. Branson stated that the University could be an active partner in developing the incubator farm.

Ashton shared that Elon University staff have been active in helping to develop the project. Ashton stated Elon staff members had assisted with providing business planning relating to the incubator farm.

Commissioner Trapp commented that the project could lead to greater intergovernmental cooperation and lessen the level of food insecurity in the Triad.

Commissioner Cashion encouraged Ashton to pursue securing a trail easement to complete the Stokesdale project.

Commissioner Phillips stated that he wanted to see the Open Space office work to improve and eventually open the various preserves found throughout the County- as only one preserve is open to the public.

Chairman Bencini encouraged Ashton to pursue partnerships and unique-out of the box- ideas to help find strategies to improve the County's preserve properties.

Lawing encouraged the Board to move on the incubator farm program if the consensus of the Board was favorable due to the upcoming planting season.

Commissioner Branson requested that the Board provide direction to the Open Space program.

Lawing clarified that the site of the proposed incubator project was formerly in active farm use. Lawing stated that the land for the preserve had been purchased with Bond proceeds and sections of the property would be leased out to individuals who were interested in raising crops.

Commissioner Branson stated that he still had some concerns regarding the project- but still supported the proposal's concept enough to let it move forward.

Motion was made by Commissioner Bruce Davis to move forward with the incubator farm at the Hines Chapel Preserve and enter into a lease agreement with the Piedmont Conservation Council, which was seconded by Commissioner Ray Trapp.

VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.
AYES: Commissioners L. Shaw, B. Davis, H. Henning, R. Trapp, A. Branson, J. Phillips, B. Bencini, K. Cashion.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioner C. Coleman.

Future Direction: Parks and Recreation

Thomas Washburn, Parks Operations Manager, provided the Board with an overview on past budget allocations made to the County Parks Department. Washburn shared that the Parks Department had recently been brought in-house- as the County took over many facilities once operated by the City of Greensboro. Washburn reviewed various models which the Board could pursue to manage Park operations. Washburn shared that programming is only offered at two County parks offer programming. Washburn stated that he was seeking direction from the Board- as the majority of programming staff have left the Department. Washburn commented he wanted to better understand the consensus of the Board before hiring new staff members. Washburn reported that the County's Park and Recreation Board recommended implementing the County Parks model.

Chairman Bencini agreed and recommended that the Board of Commissioners adopt the County Parks model.

Commissioner Branson also expressed his support for this approach.

Lawing shared that the City of Greensboro has contacted him and is interested once again in operating the parks.

Commissioner Shaw asked if the County was saving money by operating the parks system.

Lawing stated that the County is currently saving money by operating the parks. Lawing commented that a collaborative agreement could be implemented to allow the City to provide programming at the parks. Lawing reported that partnerships could be developed to ensure the quality of popular programming such as the Summer Parks Program while achieving efficiencies.

Washburn shared that the Summer Parks Program generates a lot of revenue and agreed that it would be a fruitful endeavor to partner with the City on certain projects.

Commissioner Davis asked how revenues generated at the amphitheater at Triad Park will be shared.

Mr. Washburn commented that currently revenues are shared 50%-50% between Forsyth and Guilford Counties.

County Attorney Payne advised the Board regarding potential concerns relating to amphitheater lease agreements that would need to be addressed.

Lawing suggested that open space maintenance be brought under the Parks Department due to staffing and logistics concerns.

Washburn reviewed the highlights and facilities found at each of the County Parks. Mr. Washburn discussed the baseball fields at Southwest Park. Washburn stated that the fields are not irrigated and as a result are not suitable for tournaments or league play. Washburn shared that currently the Parks Department did not have the funds needed to make the improvements. Washburn reported that the field upgrades would cost about \$12,000.

Commissioner Cashion stated that she wanted to see the field improved- so they could be enjoyed by Guilford County residents.

The Commissioners discussed Mr. Washburn's request for making repairs to the fields at Southwest Park.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Hank Henning to transfer and appropriate \$12,000 to Southwest Park, which was seconded by Commissioner Jeff Phillips.

VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.
AYES: Commissioners L. Shaw, B. Davis, H. Henning, R. Trapp, A. Branson, J. Phillips, B. Bencini, K. Cashion.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioner C. Coleman.

The Board discussed the costs associated with upgrading and renovating the pool at Hagan Stone Park, located in Pleasant Garden, NC.

Mr. Washburn indicated that the pool renovations would cost about \$1,200,000.

Commissioner Branson asked what was the revenue generated yearly by the County pools.

Washburn stated that each County pool generates about \$150,000-\$175,000 per season.

Lawing asked for direction from the Board regarding the proposed upgrades to the Hagan Stone pool. The Board asked for the improvement project to be included in a future CIP plan.

After considering the matter, it was the consensus of the Board to adopt the County Parks model.

VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.
AYES: Commissioners L. Shaw, B. Davis, H. Henning, R. Trapp, A. Branson, J. Phillips, B. Bencini, K. Cashion.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioner C. Coleman.

Property Inventory and Vacant Space

Vice Chairman Henning stated that he wanted to have a listing of County owned property.

Lawing introduced the topic and introduced Interim Property Management Director Delaine Poteat.

Poteat reviewed the marketable and unmarketable properties that the County has received through the foreclosure process. Poteat shared that the County currently owns sixteen marketable foreclosed properties.

Lawing stated that he has been in contact with the City Manager of High Point-to see if the City would be interested in purchasing any of the surplus property that is located in High Point.

Commissioner Davis suggested that veterans could work to improve the distressed properties. Davis stated that veterans could even transition into these now vacant homes-reducing the number of homeless vets while improving dilapidated buildings in the County.

Ms. Poteat stated that the County is working to sell the sixteen marketable properties.

Lawing commented that he wanted to see the County be more aggressive in working to market and sell the County's surplus properties.

County Attorney Payne stated that the City of Greensboro purchases many of the County's surplus properties located within their City limits.

Davis asked regarding the Evergreens property in High Point- asking if there had been any recent inquiries regarding the property.

Mr. Ashton commented that he has received one call in six months regarding the property. Ashton stated that a recent appraisal found the property was worth about \$2,000,000.

Lawing clarified that the land makes up the bulk of the property's value.

Ashton stated that the Lifespan and Evergreen properties consist of about ten acres each.

County Property Inventory Update

Ms. Neal provided information to the Board regarding County owned surplus office space. The Board decided to postpone hearing the formal report.

Recess at 11:05 AM.

Back in Session 11:20 AM.

Community Based Organizations

Mr. Halford, Budget Director, introduced Tansy Long, Budget & Management Analyst. Halford shared that Ms. Long is responsible for managing the CBO application process.

Ms. Long stated that the Budget Department is holding CBO applications until the Board is able to provide input and direction.

Ms. Long reviewed the highlights and history of the CBO policy. Long shared that most the applicants are from human service agencies. Long commented that funding for arts organizations is now handled through the County's incentive policies. Ms. Long explained the CBO application and review process to the Board.

Commissioner Davis asked for clarification regarding how the County handled funding requests from new non-profit groups.

Mr. Halford reported that during his tenure as Budget Director he could not recall an instance when the County provided to a start-up.

Commissioner Phillips asked for clarification regarding how the Budget Department organized the application and review process.

Ms. Long stated that applicants must submit a "Logic Model" and the internal review panel evaluates each request.

Mr. Halford explained how the staff committee reviews applications and vets agencies.

Commissioner Phillips encouraged Budget staff to ensure that applicants' values were in-line with the County's goals.

Ms. Long shared that there is a process in place which agencies are asked to align their mission with the values of the County.

Commissioner Trapp spoke in support of the CBO funding program. Trapp stated that the services provided by the contracted agencies are important and benefit the County.

The Board discussed the value of building in flexibility to the CBO selection process.

County Attorney Payne shared that the Public Health Department has both mandated service requirements and certification requirements to ensure certain services are being offered in the community or being backstopped by the department.

Commissioner Davis emphasized that the CBO program helps ensure that the County is meeting all of its obligations.

Motion was made by Commissioner Bruce Davis to abolish the Commissioners Committee and to allow staff to review CBO applicants and provide reports regarding the various applicants to the Board, which was seconded by Chairman Bill Bencini.

VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.
AYES: Commissioners L. Shaw, B. Davis, H. Henning, R. Trapp, A. Branson, J. Phillips, B. Bencini, K. Cashion.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioner C. Coleman.

The Commissioners spoke in favor of removing some of the barriers of additional application procedures and were in supported a final review of CBO applicants by the Board as a whole. Halford requested some additional flexibility in the CBO review process.

Motion was made by Vice Chairman Hank Henning to accept the staff recommendations to alter the CBO application process, which was seconded by Commissioner Ray Trapp.

VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.
AYES: Commissioners L. Shaw, B. Davis, H. Henning, R. Trapp, A. Branson, J. Phillips, B. Bencini, K. Cashion.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioner C. Coleman.

CREDIT CARD POLICY

Mr. Lawing introduced the topic. Lawing stated that there are only two credit cards issued for the staff of Guilford County to use. Lawing shared that one card is housed in the Administration Department while the other is found in the Sheriff's Department. Lawing commented that this policy has increased the number of purchase orders which the County must process. Lawing described the process as cumbersome and slow and recommended a slow roll-out of County issued P-Cards, purchase cards. Lawing stated that the policy could be implemented incrementally to allow County departments to adapt to the change.

Lawing stated that P-Cards usage would be optional for County departments. Lawing explained the various features and restrictions associated with the P-Cards.

Commissioner Davis asked if the cards would feature spending limits.

Lawing commented that each card could be designed to feature flexible spending limits depending on the individual needs of County departments.

Bonnie Stellfox, Purchasing Director, reviewed the features the of a P-Card

Commissioner Davis out at 12:00 PM.

Stellfox stated that implementing the P-Card Countywide would improve office efficiency and allow the County to process payments within days instead of months. Stellfox explained the restrictions and protections associated with the P-Card. Stellfox stated that County staff would have to receive training before being issued a P-Card. Stellfox reviewed the proposed implementation plan for the P-Card program.

Motion was made by Commissioner Linda O. Shaw to authorize staff to move forward with the P-Card program and to develop a policy governing the use of the P-Cards Countywide, which was seconded by Commissioner Kay Cashion.

VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.
AYES: Commissioners L. Shaw, B. Davis, H. Henning, R. Trapp, A. Branson, J. Phillips, B. Bencini, K. Cashion.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioner C. Coleman.

Commissioner Phillips asked for clarification.

Lawing stated that he recommended individualized cards for accountability.

Stellfox recommended a slow roll-out period to ensure proper utilization and training could be organized.

Budget Schedule

The Board reviewed the recommended budget schedule provided by the County Manager.

Motion was made by Chairman Bill Bencini to adopt the proposed budget schedule, which was seconded by Commissioner Ray Trapp.

VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.
AYES: Commissioners L. Shaw, B. Davis, H. Henning, R. Trapp, A. Branson, J. Phillips, B. Bencini, K. Cashion.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioner C. Coleman.

Recess for lunch at 12:25 PM.

Meeting Called Back to Order at 1:15 PM.

BOC Policies

The Board reviewed various alternations to the BOC policies and procedures.

After considering the matter, it was the consensus of the Board to adopt the revised BOC policies and procedures.

VOTE: Motion carried 6-0.

AYES: Commissioners L. Shaw, H. Henning, R. Trapp, A. Branson, J. Phillips, B. Bencini.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioners C. Coleman, B. Davis, K. Cashion.

Human Services Consolidation

Mr. Lawing introduced the issue and reviewed the attached materials with the Board. Lawing stated that legislation passed in 2012 provides Counties in the State the authority to consider consolidation. Lawing shared that prior to the new law being passed by the NC General Assembly only Counties with populations over 425,000 could petition to consolidate services. Mr. Lawing reviewed the process for consolidation. Lawing updated the Board on how peer Counties in the State were approaching consolidation.

Commissioner Cashion back in at 1:29 PM.

Mr. Lawing reviewed the various models for consolidation. Lawing suggested if the Board wanted to move forward with pursuing consolidation it would be a good idea to schedule a work session with a representative of North Carolina School of Government-so Commissioners could become more educated regarding the issue.

Chairman Bencini stated he was interested in hearing the presentation from the North Carolina School of Government and was open to learn more regarding the topic.

Mr. Lawing stated that he would work to organize the presentation.

Vice Chairman Henning commented that he wanted to ensure that any changes made by the County would improve the level of service delivery provided to Guilford County residents. Henning expressed an interest in learning more about the developing policy issue.

Commissioner Trapp shared that he had recently attended a seminar hosted by the North Carolina School of Government regarding the issue. Trapp stressed that the County should have a clear goal as to why it wants to pursue consolidation.

The Board expressed interest in learning more regarding the topic.

Motion was made by Chairman Bill Bencini to authorize County staff to review the merits of consolidation and to reach out to the North Carolina School of Government to provide additional training and education to the Board regarding the issue, which was seconded by Vice Chairman Hank Henning.

VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

AYES: Commissioners L. Shaw, C. Coleman, H. Henning, R. Trapp, A. Branson, J. Phillips, B. Bencini, K. Cashion.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner B. Davis.

Commissioner Cashion stated that she would be interested in learning how peer Counties in the State are dealing with the issue of human service consolidation.

Commissioner Phillips expressed concerns regarding the level of oversight at DSS.

BOC Major Goals/Focus Areas for FY 2014-2015

Mr. Lawing introduced the topic and reviewed a listing of the County's goals for FY 2013-2014.

Vice Chairman Henning stated that he wanted the Board to focus on more practical issues.

Lawing commented that he wanted to work with the Board to set specific goals.

The Board began discussing how to approach the issue.

Chairman Bencini suggested that the topic could be more fully considered at a Board work session.

Vice Chairman Henning stated that providing efficient services to the County's residents should be the Board's ultimate goal. Henning suggested that the Board review the County's Charter for guidance when working to set goals and aspirations for FY 2014-2015.

Commissioner Shaw out at 2:00 PM.

Halford shared that staff work to incorporate the County's values into the budget development process.

Vice Chairman Henning commented that surveying the Commissioners might help identify the top priorities for the Board.

Commissioner Cashion shared that she thought the Board Retreat had been helpful for her in realizing new and developing priorities for the County.

Commissioner Shaw back at 2:06 PM.

Commissioner Trapp stated that one of his top priorities for the year was addressing food deserts in the County. Trapp commented that he hoped the proposed incubator farm at the Hines Chapel Preserve would help to reduce the level of insecurity in the County.

Chairman Bencini thanked Lawing for his efforts in providing direction to the Board.

BOC Budget Directives

The Board stated that its budget directive for FY 2014-2015 was to increase revenues while managing County held debt.

Motion was made by Chairman Bill Bencini to approve the BOC's Budget Directive for FY 2014-2015, which was seconded by Commissioner Trapp.

VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.

AYES: Commissioners L. Shaw, C. Coleman, H. Henning, R. Trapp, A. Branson, J. Phillips, B. Bencini, K. Cashion.

NOES: None.

ABSENT: Commissioner B. Davis.

Lawing stated that he was seeking the Board's input regarding employee compensation.

Chairman Bencini stated that the Board supported merit pay raises for staff, but limited County resources left Commissioners with few options.

Vice Chairman Henning commented that after the County addresses the current pay equity issues it would be better positioned to consider employee pay concerns.

Commissioner Phillips expressed concerns regarding the costs associated with insurance coverage provided to staff and dependents.

Lawing shared that the County budgets about \$7.1 million a year to pay for dependent insurance coverage.

Tax Matters

Property Tax Early Payment Discount

Ben Chavis, Tax Director, stated that the practice of offering citizens a 1% discount for paying County property taxes early is practice that has been in place for over twenty five years

Chavis stated that the program has been very successful and helps the County collect taxes early. Chavis shared that counties in the State who do not offer the discount start receive payments later in the fiscal year, around November or December. Chavis commented that these counties sometimes have to appropriate fund balance to cover over day-to-day governmental operations.

Chavis shared that the discount program has benefited the County by helping it to regularly collect about 90% of the property taxes by December.

The Board discussed reducing the discount rate to 0.5%.

Baker, Finance Director, stated that a discount rate of 0.5% would not offer citizens much incentive to pay early.

Chavis shared that only three counties in the State have a discount rate below 1%.

Chairman Bencini stated that about 80% of the early payments come from mortgage firms-who are required by State law to pay early if counties offer an incentive program.

Chavis commented that the discount program costs the County about \$1.7 million per year.

Commissioner Coleman asked if the interest earned from early property tax payments could be invested.

Commissioner Phillips expressed concerns regarding the utility of investing tax payer's funds. Phillips suggested that County residents could be better served by reducing the property tax rate.

Vice Chairman Henning asked if the County was obligated to have a discount program.

Payne shared did not know and would have to complete research to answer the question.

The Board discussed what the appropriate minimum discount rate should be and directed the County Attorney to complete research to learn what the lowest rate the County could set.

Chavis reported that the larger counties- including: Durham, Forsyth, Mecklenburg, and Wake do not offer a discount program.

Commissioner Coleman stated that she was concerned about the public perception if the County pursued eliminating the discount program.

Baker commented that as the County has a very limited fund balance reserve, altering the discount rate could impact liquidity. Baker stated that if property tax payments came later in the year; than the County might not have enough funds to fully fund all of its operations. Baker advised the Commissioners to increase the level of the County's fund balance.

Chairman Bencini echoed Baker's concerns stating that the alternation could impact the County's cash-flow.

Commissioner Phillips stated that he hoped the Board would address the fund balance issue while preparing this year's budget. Phillips suggested that the County look to reduce the property tax rate.

Commissioner Cashion commented that she thought that the proposed change in the discount rate could jeopardize the County's cash-flow and operations. Cashion urged the Board to be mindful of the potential impacts of the alternation.

Mr. Chavis reviewed the advantages and disadvantages of offering the property tax discount.

Chairman Bencini asked how the municipalities in the County would be impacted if the County decided to alter the property tax discount.

Lawing stated that any changes would require joint discussions between the staff and the various municipalities in the County.

Payne commented that the County would be the driving force behind any changes.

The Board asked Mr. Chavis to provide his recommendation regarding the property tax discount rate. Chavis stated that if the Board was inclined to alter the discount rate, he recommended reducing the rate down to 0.5%. Chavis commented that he would not recommend completely removing the property tax discount program.

Baker informed the Board that municipalities in the County also set their own property tax rates. Baker suggested that it would be to the Board's benefit to work with the local municipalities if they wished to alter the discount rate.

Baker shared that the County's Fire Districts, in particular, could be impacted financially if the Board altered the discount rate. Baker stated that if the discount rate was reduced or eliminated than tax payers would most likely pay later in the fiscal year. As the County pays the Fire Districts as funds are made available as taxes and fees are paid, any alternation in the County's cash-flow could have an unanticipated impact on the liquidity of the various Fire Districts.

Vice Chairman Henning asked why larger counties in the State do not offer a tax discount.

Lawing commented that most likely the Counties which Henning addressed have a larger fund balance which can better handle liquidity issues.

Commissioner Phillips stated that he felt it would be a good idea to integrate feedback from Guilford County citizens into the Board's discussions regarding the property tax discount issue.

Commissioner Cashion commented that if altering the County's tax discount policy would have any negative impacts on the Volunteer Fire Districts, she wanted to have more detailed information before making a decision on the matter.

Commissioner Branson shared that may Fire Departments are struggling to keep the doors open. Branson expressed concerns about changing the policy.

Commissioner Phillips commented that he also had concerns with the timing of the measure.

REVALUATION SCHEDULE

Chavis, Tax Director, stated that his office was considering shortening the County's revaluation schedule. Chavis shared that the North Carolina General Statutes require counties to revalue properties every eight years-unless a county adopts a shorter schedule. Chavis commented that currently fifty five North Carolina counties have a shorter or flexible revaluation cycle.

Chavis reviewed historic revaluation and County property tax rates with the Board. Chavis commented on the technological advances which have made the revaluation process more efficient. Chavis commented that the Tax Department upgraded its software package in 2009. Chavis shared that the County heard a record number of appeals in 2010 due to the impacts of the 2008 recession.

Commissioner Shaw asked Mr. Chavis for his recommendation.

Chavis stated that he was recommending that the Board adopt a five year reevaluation cycle. Chavis commented that a five year cycle would help to protect the County from spikes.

Chavis shared that when the County had a set reevaluation schedule it was less able to adapt to catastrophic changes in the economy.

Commissioner Shaw made a motion to change the revaluation schedule to five years.

Commissioner Shaw reported that she had heard several complaints from constituents regarding the issue.

Chavis reviewed the costs associated with transitioning to a five year schedule. Chavis stated that the Tax Department would need to make technical upgrades valued at about \$210,000. Chavis commented that the project would require an additional \$480,000 to pay staff to complete the revaluation. Chavis stated that the grand total for the review would be about \$690,000.

Commissioner Coleman asked if reevaluations impact the foreclosure rate in the County.

Chavis stated that the County usually adjusts its property tax rate as property values increase to reduce the financial strain on tax payers.

Lawing commented that the County usually pursues a revenue neutral approach.

Chairman Bencini asked what the time constraints were if the County wanted to pursue any alterations to the reevaluation schedule.

Chavis stated that his Department would like to know as soon as possible, but would need at least two years to properly prepare for the review.

Commissioner Shaw made a motion to change the revaluation cycle to five years, which was seconded by Chairman Bill Bencini.

Commissioner Phillips stated that he would like additional time to review and consider how the alternations could potentially impact the County.

Chairman Bencini commented that the Tax Committee could further review the matter and develop recommendations for the full Board to review.

Commissioner Shaw withdrew her motion.

Chavis asked that the Tax Committee also consider reviewing how the County advertises for delinquent taxes.

The Board was favorable to the suggestion.

Meeting entered Recess at 3:33 PM

Meeting called back into Session at 3:53 PM

GTCC/Downtown University Campus

Ed Kitchen reviewed the proposed downtown university campus (Union Square Campus) proposal with the Board. Mr. Kitchen introduced the representatives from the various colleges that would be involved with the project. Kitchen reviewed the preferred sites for the new Campus. Kitchen shared that the venture would be a public-private partnership between GTCC, NC A&T, UNCG, and Cone Health. Kitchen commented that the partners would share 105,000 square feet on four floors. Kitchen stated that the initial cost for phase one of the facility would be about forty million dollars, which would include the academic building as well as parking.

Kitchen commented that he was optimistic that the project could receive support from foundations and grants. Kitchen stated that he is currently working with the City of Greensboro-who owns the property where the proposed facility will be built.

Kitchen reviewed the proposed construction schedule and timeline with the Board. Kitchen shared that he hopes the facility completed and open for use by summer 2016.

Kitchen stated that the facility would help to train nurses and other health professionals. Kitchen shared that the development would create about sixty five jobs. Kitchen shared he was optimistic that the project would spur an additional \$45 million in private development around the new facility. Kitchen commented that the consortium is working to brand the greater Greensboro area as a Higher Education Community.

Kitchen then introduced the project's master developer, Bob Chapman.

Bob Chapman reviewed the overall concept of facility with the Board-explaining that he wanted to create walkable-vibrant community. Chapman stated that he was confident that the project would spur additional development in the surrounding downtown community.

Chairman Bencini asked if the development firm would continue to own and manage the site after the facility is completed.

Chapman stated that the private development firm would own and operate the apartment complex-which is planned for the site. Chapman commented that a public consortium would manage the classroom facility and any additional development would be owned by private firms.

Kitchen shared that the association of schools has set up non-profit-LLC.

Commissioner Trapp asked if the proposed development would impact surrounding neighborhoods.

Chapman commented that his firm was looking to develop from Lee Street back towards MLK Drive. Chapman stated that hopefully the project would spark new development to south of proposed facility.

Commissioner Cashion shared that she was very excited and fully supported the project.

Commissioner Shaw stated that GTCC is growing and could certainly use the extra space. Shaw expressed her support for GTCC and the project.

Randy Parker, with GTCC, discussed the growth of the College's health care programs over the past few years. Parker stated that GTCC would utilize 22,000 sq. ft. of space at the new facility. Parker shared that the project has not yet been approved by GTCC Board of Trustees.

Chairman Bencini asked what would be the annual financial obligation to operate at the facility.

Parker commented that a proposed lease agreement calls for a rate of \$10.00 per sq. ft. - so the College's yearly allocation for rent at the new facility would be about \$200,000.

Commissioner Phillips asked for clarification regarding gap funding.

Kitchen provided a general overview of the funding model the consortium was considering employing.

Parker shared that their Board would have to approve the lease between now and June to ensure the project would remain on schedule. Parker commented that GTCC's funding request would not be made until F/Y 16-17. Parker stated to move forward with the project GTCC would need the approval of the Board of Commissioners and the GTCC Board of Trustees.

Chairman Bencini asked what programs GTCC would offer at the new facility.

Parker stated that GTCC plans to move an existing program into the new facility that is currently located at Cone Health. Parker commented that moving the program would open new space for other programs that are expanding. Parker shared that the partnership would allow GTCC to offer programming which is responsive to the needs of the community.

Parker then shared some of the recent accomplishments that GTCC has achieved.

Review of Boards and Commissions Appointments and Reappointments

Robin Keller, Clerk to the Board, provided the Board with handouts and an explanation of a proposed policy alternation which would work to streamline the method by which the Clerk's Office organizes appointments and reappointments. Keller shared that the Clerk's Office has been working collaboratively with the Information Services Department to create resources that will help to better manage the appointment process. Further efficiencies will be realized, as additional resources are made available.

Chairman Bencini commented that qualified applicants are needed for the Counties various Boards and Commissions. Bencini asked if the Clerk's Office works to actively recruit applicants.

Keller stated that she is working to improve the responsiveness of the Clerk's Office. Keller shared that the Clerk's Office has never actively recruited applicants. Keller commented that she was interested in starting a recruitment drive to help find applicants and decrease the County's Boards and Commissions vacancy rate.

Commissioner Shaw stated that it would be ideal for all of the Commissioners districts to be represented on the Planning Board and Board of Equalization and Review.

Vice Chairman Henning commented that he wanted to have information regarding Board vacancies earlier. Henning asked for the Clerk's Office to update Commissioners by email regarding upcoming appointments.

Commissioner Shaw shared that the Nursing Home Advisory Board is having a difficult time finding applicants to fill vacancies on the Board.

Commissioner Shaw stated that applicants appointed to various Boards should know who their County Commissioner is

Commissioner Coleman stated that many Citizens Academy participants have expressed interest in serving on County Boards. Coleman spoke in support of the Citizens Academy program. Coleman stated that the Board needed to address key appointments.

Commissioner Cashion spoke to Commissioner Shaw and Coleman's point- stating that one Citizen Academy graduate was recently appointed to the Nursing Home Advisory Board.

Keller explained to the Board how the Clerk's Office maintains and manages applications.

Commissioner Shaw suggested that the Board develop a work-group to address and update the BOC appointment process.

Chairman Bencini asked Vice Chairman Henning and Commissioner Coleman to work on the subgroup.

Vice Chairman Henning stated that a central database which houses all the collected applications would be helpful- so Commissioners could review Board vacancies and potential applicants.

Commissioner Coleman stated that the City of Greensboro has a good system for appointing citizens to Boards and Commissions.

Chairman Bencini asked Vice Chairman Henning and Commissioner Coleman to consider and advise the Board on key appointments to County Commissions.

Commissioner Shaw commented that she wanted to review the applications. Shaw stated that the applications should inform the Commissioners which district the applicant is from.

Commissioner Trapp stated that a few Boards are very popular with citizens. Trapp commented that some Boards while not popular do important work. Trapp shared that citizens are attracted to a few high profile Commissions in the County.

Commissioner Phillips commended Keller for working to improve the efficiencies of the Clerk's Office and asked for key appointments to be made.

Commissioner Coleman stated that Board appointments should have representatives from each County Commissioner district. Coleman also urged Commissioners and the Clerk's Office to enforce Board term limits.

Commissioner Shaw shared that she agreed with Commissioner Coleman's point.

Keller reported that she plans to work toward digitalizing Board applicants in an effort to improve efficiency.

Chairman Bencini asked Commissioners to contact Keller if they wanted to serve as a liaison to particular County Board.

Commissioner Coleman stated that it would be helpful if Commissioners knew when BOC Committees were meeting. Coleman shared that this would keep all Commissioners informed regarding developing policy positions. Coleman asked for Committees to provide the full Board with reports and updates.

Commissioner Phillips commented that meeting minutes are regularly sent to the full Board. Phillips suggested if Coleman had a particular question regarding the work of one of the Committees- that she contact the Committee Chair.

Chairman Bencini commented that Committees of four would allow Commissioners to serve on more Boards if they would like. Bencini encouraged the Board to join a Committee of their choice.

Project Haystack Update

Lawing provided an update to the Board regarding Project Haystack. Lawing shared that he has held community meetings in Gibsonville and will hold a meeting with the Alamance County Board of Commissioners later in the month. Lawing commented that he and the Project Haystack team are still working to develop an inter-local agreement to manage the project. Lawing reported that no County funds have been spent on the project as of yet. Lawing also presented a letter to the Board from the NCDOT which expressed their willingness to help improve infrastructure around the project site.

Commissioner Coleman asked if any land owners have sold to the County as of yet.

Lawing shared that only one lot had been sold to the County.

Commissioner Shaw shared that she had recently spoken to a representative from the Governor's Office. Shaw reported that the Governor and his Administration is supportive of the project.

Chairman Bencini commented on the growth of data centers throughout the Country.

Commissioner Shaw shared that she was optimistic regarding the project. Shaw stated that she hoped the project site would attract manufacturing firms to the County.

After considering the matter, it was the consensus of the Board to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: Motion carried 8-0.
AYES: Commissioners L. Shaw, H. Henning, R. Trapp, A. Branson, J. Phillips, B. Bencini, C. Coleman, K. Cashion.
NOES: None.
ABSENT: Commissioner B. Davis.

Chairman

Deputy Clerk to Board