

MINUTES

February 1, 2007

The Davidson County Board of Commissioners met at the Davidson County Economic Development Commission Board Room on February 1, 2007, at 8:00 A.M. for a Planning **Retreat**.

PRESENT

Commissioners: Chairman Fred McClure, Vice Chairman Don Truell, Larry Allen, Billy Joe Kepley, Larry Potts, Dr. Max Walser, Sam Watford

County Manager Robert Hyatt, Assistant County Manager Zeb Hanner, County Attorney Robert Hedrick, Clerk to the Board Anne Burkhardt, IT Director Joel Hartley, Planning and Zoning Director Guy Cornman, Tax Administrator Joe Silver, Finance Director Jane Kiker, Economic Development Director Steve Googe

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Fred McClure called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION

Commissioner Larry Potts

ADOPT AGENDA

On a motion by Commissioner Larry Allen and a second by Vice Chairman Don Truell the Board voted unanimously 7-0 to adopt the agenda. (Exhibit 1)

Brainstorming

The Board noted additional topics to be discussed that the Board may want to include in their discussions: Register of Deeds Technology Update, PART, Rules of Order, Illegal Immigrants

(Exhibit 2)

Presentation of Proposed Five Year Capital Improvement Plan by Zeb M. Hanner, Assistant County

Manager

Zeb M. Hanner presented a review of completed projects and noted the projects that are in process as well as future projects.

Discussion followed on the handling of leachate in other areas with a request to check on the process in Wilmington.

More discussion followed on the impact of speeding up school construction/renovation projects. It was noted that an additional \$14,000,000 would have to be borrowed to build the request for a middle school. Mr. Hanner emphasized that if the tax rate is reduced, then the fund balance would also be reduced.

Mr. Hanner then noted the space needs issues including the Jail, JTEC, Work Force Development Center, and Social Services. (Exhibit 3)

Financial Update

Review of County's Current Financial Status by Jane Kiker

Jane Kiker presented information on fund balance and the value of having unreserved fund balance. She noted that the State is unpredictable with funding and mandates; emergency funds are needed in case of disasters or other unexpected emergency situations and credit ratings are affected by the amount of fund balance. Mrs. Kiker further noted the importance of maintaining fund balance to keep interest rates down and stated that when the fund balance goes down, tax rates have to be increased or operating expense has to be decreased. Mrs. Kiker stated that she is comfortable with the rating at 15%. Robert Hyatt prefers 18%. The Board was divided 4 to 3 in favor of 15%. The Board requested that the County Manager compare the County's rating with other counties and report back to the Board. (Exhibit 4)

Revaluation by Joe Silver

Joe Silver exhibited the estimated figures for total tax valuation for 2007 (\$11,413,967,523.00), which includes Real Property (\$10,216,226,440.00), Motor Vehicles (\$1,114,492,174.00), Adjusted Real Property (\$9,194,603,796.00), Person + P/U Minus Exempt (\$1,104,871,553.00).

Mr. Silver then presented a request to hire one appraiser at present and another one in the 2007-2008 budget year. He further stated that a business auditor needs to be hired. The Board acknowledged that the request for one full-time permanent appraiser position would be on the February 13, 2007 agenda.

Discussion continued on appeals, motor vehicle valuations, and discounts. It was noted that vehicle valuations are established by the State. It was acknowledged that the figures for offering discounts would be looked into and brought back to the Board. (Exhibit 5)

Land Use Plan Update by Guy Cornman, Planning and Zoning Director

Guy Cornman stated that the Land Use Plan is a guide for growth and development in the County. He noted that sewer, schools, landfill, reservoir, tourism/recreation and zoning were addressed previously

in the land use plan. He further stated that a thoroughfare plan needs to be considered in the next work on the plan. The Board acknowledged that lot size will be a point of discussion in the next work on the plan as well. The Board agreed also to consider making the Planning Board the “approving authority” and the Board of Commissioners the “appealing authority.” (Exhibit 6)

Local Impact of Mental Health Reform by Catherine Lambeth, Social Services Director

Catherine Lambeth noted the difficulty to find providers who will accept Medicaid and further noted that the impact of the Mental Health Reform has greatly slowed the process for placement of children. She informed the Board that as a result, there are 22 children in therapeutic placement, of which only 3 are in Davidson County. Ms. Lambeth emphasized that Davidson County Social Services is in a crisis mode due to the Mental Health Reform. (Exhibit 6A)

Economic Development Update by Steve Googe, Economic Development Director

Steve Googe presented information from the Institute of Government, referencing the North Carolina General Statutes. Mr. Googe noted, based on the Statutes, that the name of a company that may receive an economic development incentive grant, is not necessarily required in a notice or public hearing. Mr. Googe emphasized the need for confidentiality when requested by a company. He further emphasized that agreements are not made before a public hearing is held and the public hearing is not to approve or disapprove the company, but to consider the agreement itself. He stated that once the client and the company reach an agreement, then the name has to be released. He then discussed past experiences when there has been a lack of confidentiality and the County has lost its status of integrity with a company. He further discussed a more recent experience with the loss of confidentiality with a member of the media and a confrontation by another member of the media concerning the release of the name of a company. He, again, stated the information found in the Statutes.

Preliminary Report from Facilities/Space Needs Study by Steve Allen, Local Government Solutions

Mr. Steve Allen was unable to be present due to inclement weather conditions.

Board Deliberation on Issues Identified During Brainstorming Session

Tax

The Board expressed concerns with proposed legislation for *no tax* to the furniture industry by NC Joint Furniture Technology Center Committee.

Economic Development

The Board received information that work is ongoing to possibly assemble or acquire the property for the mega-site within the next 90 days.

Alternative Funding Sources

The Board discussed the possibility of having transfer fees.

The Board also discussed a requirement for more financial information or audit reports from fire departments.

The Board then discussed the consideration of the status of the tax rate for the 2007-2008 budget year. The Board noted the high rate of unemployment in the County as well.

Consolidation of Legal Services

Robert Hyatt noted the need for another full-time attorney position, which would make five positions in the legal services department and noted that the positions should be in a common area. The Board was agreeable to consider placement of the position in the 2007-2008 budget. (Exhibit 7)

Public Information Officer

Robert Hyatt expressed the need for a Public Information Officer and emphasized the need for someone to be available to deliver information to the media and the public. Discussion followed.

Commissioners Watford and Potts expressed their opposition to the creation of the position.

Space Needs

The County Manager noted that the Don Mays Property was purchased due to the close proximity to other county property and adjoining the EMS property. He stated that the 911 department needed more space and will be moving in the back portion of the Don Mays Building. He further stated that offices housed in leased space, such as Probation/Parole, and some law enforcement space, may be moved to the Don Mays location, to be decided after the Space Needs Study has been completed.

Expansion of Parks and Recreation

The Board discussed the need for more funding in the Parks and Recreation budget to provide for the projects included in the Tourism plans. The Board received information on the growth of Lake-Thom-A-Lex. The Board was informed that land for a park in the Tuckertown Dam area may be available from ALCOA. The Board was made aware of the shortage of gymnasiums in schools and the problems in

scheduling basketball games and practices. It was suggested that the problem be addressed with the school construction committees to be sure new schools include gymnasiums or adequate multi-purpose rooms. The great need for a Multi-Sports facility was also discussed.

Performance-Based Budgeting/Zero-Based Budgeting

Zeb Hanner reported that the money saved in Performance-Based Budgeting can be and is used for projects in the departments. He then stated that Zero-Based Budgeting involves the justification of each item.

PART

The Board received information that the formation of PART, involving 10 counties, helps to reduce smog with the use of buses and reducing the number of cars on the road daily. The Board then discussed the possibility of a \$.05 tax on rental vehicles. The Board agreed that a public hearing would be called for to receive public input on the \$.05 tax on rental vehicles.

Illegal Immigration

The Board discussed the need for local government to make sure the people they hire and the people they contract with and their employees are in this country by legal status. The Board agreed to receive more information on the subject for study.

Video Broadcasting


The Board was receptive to the information provided by Clark/Powell for sound system equipment video and broadcasting of Commissioners' meetings. (Exhibit 8)

Rules of Order

The Board discussed the adherence to the adopted Rules of Order, based on *Robert's Rules of Order*.

ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Commissioner Walser and a second by Commissioner Potts, the Board voted unanimously 7-0 to adjourn.


Anne M. Burkhart, Clerk to the Board
Davidson County Board of Commissioners


Fred McClure, Chairman
Davidson County Board of Commissioners