

POLK COUNTY
January 24, 2011
9:00AM BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' RETREAT
R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice
Womack Building
Columbus, NC
MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Gasperson, Vice-Chair McDermott, Commissioner Owens, Commissioner Pack and Commissioner Walker. Also in attendance were County Manager Whitson, Clerk to the Board Fehrmann, staff, media and citizens

1. Call to Order – Chair Gasperson called the meeting to order.
2. Invocation – Commissioner Owens gave the invocation.
3. Pledge of Allegiance – Commissioner Pack led the pledge.
4. Meeting Locations – It was determined that the March 7, 2011, regular BOC meeting will be held at the Green Creek Fire Department, and the June 6, 2011, regular BOC meeting will be held at the Saluda Public Library.
5. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance Procedures – It was determined that the Clerk to the Board will work with the Chair to coordinate the invocation and pledge.
6. Polk County School System's Financial Status - Bill Miller, Superintendent, gave a presentation and the information is on file with these minutes.
7. Polk County Financial Status – Sandra Hughes, Finance Director, gave a presentation and the information is on file with these minutes.

Chair Gasperson read the following statement:

To list a few ingredients of a well-run organization, from a small business to large corporations, including government organizations, I'm convinced that there must be good, fair, pragmatic leadership, sound responsible financial management that's always planning ahead, and a dedicated, loyal, workforce.

I'm convinced that over the past 2 years these ingredients have been present among the management, department heads and employees of Polk County government, and this has led to a high level of morale among our employees even during these difficult financial times.

*Last week a question went out to county department heads from Commissioners Pack and Owens asking how a 32 hour work week (which is essentially a 20% pay cut) would impact their abilities to do their jobs. This question implies that our county is on the brink of major financial difficulties. **I strongly disagree!** What's*

even more puzzling is that only a few weeks ago Commissioner Owens asked our finance office how much it would add to the budget to give county employees up to a 5% pay increase. The net result of all of this false controversy is that the morale among our county employees has taken a severe blow.

Commissioner Owens said that he and Commissioner Pack did not intend to negatively impact employee morale with their question, nor did they intend to imply that the County is in financial difficulty. Like good businessmen, they were only trying to explore a viable contingency plan in the event of future financial trouble. Commissioner Pack said that, as a business owner, he is very aware of the importance of good employee morale and would never do anything to jeopardize that. Vice-Chair McDermott said in this case it might have been better to sit down with department heads one on one. Regarding Chair Gasperson's reference to a 5% employee pay increase, Commissioner Owens clarified his opinion that if the previous Board was concerned about having too large of a fund balance and could pay off a 2 million dollar loan early with the fund balance, as they did, then they could have given the employees a 5% raise as well.

County Manager Whitson gave an overview of the County's financial status, and a copy of his statement is on file with these minutes.

8. County Water Systems – County Engineer Dave Odom gave an overview and a copy of the PowerPoint presentation is on file with these minutes.
9. Sheriff's Department/Jail/Animal Control – Sheriff Donald Hill gave a presentation and the information is on file with these minutes.
10. Register of Deeds – Sheila Whitmire gave a presentation and the information is on file with these minutes.
11. Departments – Each of the following department heads gave a presentation and the information is on file with these minutes.
 1. Management Information Systems - Marche Pittman
 2. Communications - Marche Pittman
 3. DSS - Sue Rhodes
 4. Transfer Station - Neal Hall
 5. EMS - Sandra Halford
 6. Transportation – Tracy Waters (Admin. Assist.)
 7. Library - Cindy Nanney
 8. Tax Assessor - John Bridgers
 9. The Meeting Place - Pam Doty
 10. Saluda Senior Center - Pam Doty
 11. Public Buildings CC/JP - Mickey Edwards
 12. Finance - Sandra Hughes
 13. Recreation- Patty Aldred

14. Administration - Ryan Whitson
 15. 911 Communications - Diane Rickman
 16. Veterans Services - Darrel Moore
 17. Community Development - Steve Jones
 18. Tax Collector - Melissa Bowlin
 19. Planning - Cathy Ruth
 20. Elections - Dale Edwards. Ms. Edwards agreed to look into the availability of funds for a handicap accessible front door for the Womack building.
 21. Agricultural Economic Development - Lynn Sprague
 22. Cooperative Extension - John Vining
 23. Travel & Tourism - Melinda Young. Prior to the presentation County Manager Whitson announced that the Carolina Foothills Chamber of Commerce would like to take responsibility for the County's travel & tourism efforts. The Chamber would be funded through occupancy tax revenue.
 24. Governing Body - Ryan Whitson
 25. Soil & Water - Sandra Reid
 26. Rescue Squad – Current year allocation is \$63,990.
 27. Forestry – Current year allocation is \$53,410.
 28. Emergency Management - Sandra Halford
 29. Economic Development - Ryan Whitson.
12. The meeting was adjourned.

ATTEST:

POLK COUNTY BOARD
OF COMMISSIONERS

Beth Fehrmann
Clerk to the Board

Ray Gasperson
Chair