

POLK COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING
Monday, April 18, 2011, 3:00pm
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, County Attorney Egan, 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 – Vice-Chair McDermott led the pledge.
4. Approval of Minutes – Commissioner Owens made a motion to approve the February 22, 2011, Joint Water meeting and April 4, 2011, regular BOC meeting minutes, seconded by Commissioner Walker and the motion carried unanimously.
5. Approval of Agenda – County Manager Whitson added Agenda Item #15b. Communication from the Hospital. Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.
6. Fourth of July Celebration – Jonathan Kanipe, Columbus Town Manager, gave an update on this year's celebration. He thanked the County, and Commissioners personally, for contributing to the fireworks display, and the memorandum he read is on file with these minutes. Commissioners agreed that they are pleased to collaborate with and come to the aide of the Town of Columbus for this year's celebration.
7. Polk County Schools Budget Request – Polk County School Superintendent Bill Miller, Jr., formally presented the request for \$300,000 for FY 2011/12.
8. March Refund Request – Melissa Bowlin, Tax Collector, presented the refund request. Commissioner Owens made a motion to approve the March refund request, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.
9. NCACC Board of Directors Meeting – Vice-Chair McDermott informed the Board about the meeting held on April 13th in Raleigh. The information is on file with these minutes.

10. Human Services Facility Change Order – Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve the Human Services Facility Change Order to decrease the original contract sum with Able Constructors, Inc., in the amount of \$5,378, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.
11. Budget Amendment – Commissioner Owens made a motion to approve BA #21 in the amount of \$24,700 to increase revenue and expense for a Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Grant for Agricultural Economic Development, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.
12. Gould Killian CPA Group Audit Contract – Vice-Chair McDermott made a motion to approve the Gould Killian CPA Group Audit Contract, seconded by Commissioner Walker and the motion carried unanimously.
13. Mark III Medical Plan Projections & Options – Tracy McCarty of Mark III gave a presentation on the projections and options for fiscal year 2011-2012. County Manager Whitson was instructed to poll the County employees at the annual employee meeting on April 27th to determine if they would rather pay a portion of their health insurance premium, or pay a higher deductible. It was the consensus of the Board to table this item until the May 2, 2011, meeting.
14. Economic Development Department – *The following portion of the meeting minutes was transcribed verbatim.*

Chair Gasperson: Vice-Chair McDermott placed this on the agenda.

Vice-Chair McDermott: As the other Commissioners know, we had an excellent meeting with the Economic Development Commission (EDC) this morning and learned about their proposal for hiring an Economic Development Director (EDD) and getting moving again on economic development in Polk County, and possibly combining Economic Development with Travel & Tourism, which is, of course, a subset of economic development, especially here in Polk County. And I was interested to hear what the other Commissioners thought about that meeting, and the proposal made in the meeting, and if there's some thoughts about how we should proceed from here. I, myself, am definitely in favor of bringing on board an EDD and I would like to see the Economic Development office combined with Travel & Tourism.

Chair Gasperson: We did have an excellent meeting this morning. And, Ambrose, you were there and I don't know if you wish to stand up at the lectern while we're discussing this, if there's any further questions from other Commissioners. But, would like other comments. And Vice-Chair McDermott has really made herself known, your position. And I admit I, too, very much am in favor of having an EDD in our budget for the next year. We've talked about this a great deal. I know we don't have the full scope of the work outlined, although we've had proposals. Very much, we've had a great detail given to us this morning in particular. And,

perhaps, Commissioner Owens or Commissioner Walker? You have any comments?

Commissioner Walker: It was a wonderful presentation and Ms. Jones did a wonderful job as well, pulling a lot of numbers together. And I still have some digesting to do of that. But the packet had a lot of good information. You know, I know a lot of times I've read, you know, when you don't feel like exercising or you don't feel like praying, is the very time that you need to do it. And I know that it's tough out there right now, but I think that same line of reasoning follows through with this, and that we do need an EDD. And we need to be very innovative in our approach, and that's one of the things that we did talk about today. That we're not your typical county. I don't know that we have ever been. So, finding that right person is going to be important, and I think that there's some really good things we could do that are maybe not what you traditionally would think of when you think of economic development. And I think that we have a wonderful board. I am so impressed with the knowledge base. And one of the things that we talked about in the past was accountability and how do you measure that success. And they've got some really great ideas for how to put that into motion. And that was one of the things that I was concerned with. I also like the idea of contracting this position very much. I, myself, am self-employed and have been all my life and I am more oriented in that nature. And I think you can do a . . . I think it might be a little bit easier to evaluate and to follow through with some of those matrixes, is that what we call it, for the accountability with a contracted position. So, I, too, am very much in favor of that. And I have enjoyed hearing . . . you know, I kind of came to those meetings going, "Okay, we're going to talk about this." And it is like, okay, here we go again. And I have, like, these old reviews from like the 90's and stuff. I have stacks of papers from when every time we'd get together and we'd talk about this, and then nothing really happened. So, I think it's real important that we make sure something happens with this. And I think some of the new approaches will help with that. So, that's my two cents.

Chair Gasperson: Commissioner Owens or Pack? Do you have comments? From this morning's meeting, Commissioner Owens?

Commissioner Owens: The meeting went very well. And, of course, as all of you know, and I'm not telling you something you don't know, I never would have eliminated the position of EDD to start with, because I've always felt like it is a needed position. The only thing I would tell you to caution the Commissioners, I passed around a description of the EDD that you have that has been approved. The EDC has given us much information that we need, and I think what we need to do is to get all that put together, and that's going to take a lot of work. Before you establish a position you need to have, I think, the job description and all the things that . . . For example, as you know, we've talked a good bit about the direction of the work will come from the EDC rather than the County Manager. I think all that needs to be spelled out before we actually do the actual thing. As far as being in favor of an economic development position, yes sir, I am. And I always have been and always will be. I think they have brought before us a lot of good things that we need to incorporate into something written and approved. So far, the only thing

you have approved is what's in front of you. So, you need to go back, we need to go back and incorporate this. I know they talked about a committee this morning, and I've been thinking about that since then. That committee may need to go to work before we ever decide to go anywhere else. Because they may need to come before us and say. "This is what we recommend." And give us a chance to approve that. But, definitely, if you want a bottom line to my statement, yes, we need an economic development position.

Chair Gasperson: And, you saying that, I can only assume that the County Manager should include in his budget that he's submitting, even though we may not be hiring one July 1st. We have to wait for the right individual and I understand. But we should plan financially.

Commissioner Owens: We can plan financially, but I don't want this to say we've got that position until we have this other information in place and approved.

Chair Gasperson: Right.

Commissioner Owens: Personally, as one Commissioner, I would not want to approve it until we have all this in place. For example, like I said, right now, who directs his work is not the EDC. They are a advisor right now.

Chair Gasperson: Okay.

Commissioner Owens: Does that make sense?

EDC Chair (Ambrose) Mills: Yeah, and I would like to address your comment about the timing. It's important for us to get an approval for the position so we can start the search. I know your own attitude is we don't want to rush and get the wrong person.

Commissioner Owens: Correct.

EDC Chair Mills: We want to take any amount of time that's necessary to find the right candidate for the job. But, in order to do that, I think we should start as soon as possible. And, in order to do that, you have to authorize a position for us to start looking. As far as a further description, we'll be glad to work together on that.

Commissioner Owens: Well, but I think you missed my point, Ambrose. I think what I'm saying to you, that committee needs to get together right away under our direction and give us that so we can move on. I don't . . . if we create the position and fund it, it's there.

EDC Chair Mills: Okay, that's what I'm asking.

Commissioner Owens: But, we need this . . . in my opinion as one Commissioner, is we need this description first before we go forward, because we need to know what he's going to do and who he's going to report to, and all these good things as far as a job description is concerned. I'm not talking about goals and other things.

EDC Chair Mills: You should have in your . . . sent to you a detailed job description.

Commissioner Owens: Of course, yes, but it's not been approved.

Vice-Chair McDermott: But that's up to us to approve it, isn't it?

Commissioner Owens: Yes, and that's what I'm saying. If this is what we want to go with, fine. If this is what we Commissioners, I'm talking about we Commissioners, want to go with, that's fine. But, we're getting the cart before the

horse as far as I'm concerned. We got to approve a job description before we approve the position.

Chair Gasperson: Okay.

Commissioner Owens: Does that make sense?

EDC Chair Mills: Well . . .

Commissioner Owens: I mean, you can do it, you can do it, but what you . . . well, let's do a bad scenario. Let's say you do that, and none of us up here agree on what the fellow ought to do or not do, or lady, excuse me.

Commissioner Walker: Fella?

Commissioner Owens: Lady, excuse me, lady ought to do or not do. I'm not trying to be hard to get along with, I'm just saying I think we're getting the cart before the horse because we do not have a job description for this position, except for the one that already been approved years ago.

EDC Chair Mills: We have not approved one, that's correct.

Commissioner Owens: That's correct. So, if we set up here and say we're going to go with this position, and we're going to fund it, then we're basing it on this job description, not on your proposal.

EDC Chair Mills: Well, what are our commission is asking from the Board of Commissioners is to approve a position and the details on the exact job description can be worked out from that. I think you need to approve the position and budget it, and then we can put together a job description that's acceptable.

Commissioner Owens: Well, let me get more technical with you. If we approve it, we tell the County Manager to put it in his budget, you still don't have it until June.

EDC Chair Mills: Correct.

Commissioner Owens: You with me?

Commissioner Walker: July.

EDC Chair Mills: Yes.

Commissioner Owens: Well, July 1st, but you don't have it approved until we approve the budget in June. It don't matter what we say up here right now.

EDC Chair Mills: Agreed.

Commissioner Owens: Just like Bill Miller and his \$300,000. He ain't got it yet, until we approve that budget. Although we can count on him to get it.

EDC Chair Mills: But he's counting on it, just like we'd like to.

County Manager Whitson: Commissioners, I might can help you out with this. I think this position is proposed to be a contracted position. This Board will have to vote to approve the contract, not the EDC Board. It will be the Board of Commissioners.

Chair Gasperson: Yes.

Vice-Chair McDermott: But I think . . . what I'm suggesting is that, in principle, we approve having an EDD and providing funding for it in the next year's budget. And, at that point, asking the EDC to prepare for our consideration and, perhaps, approval a final job description of that contract position. But, until we say yes we want that position, it wouldn't make sense for them to spend their time doing that. Clearly, we have to either keep the current job description, which is very sketchy, or come up with a new one which would give the EDC and whoever the contractor

is who would be hired, much more direction than there has been in the past about what the priorities are in Polk County.

Commissioner Pack: I'm going to wade into this and . . . I had a meeting, it's been several week ago, with Ambrose and we had a lengthy discussion. I actually give him some points that I thought were important. And I've been working on it for quite some time, well over a year. I'm in support of the EDD, but this is where it gets sort of hairy, if you want to say that. We've got to make sure we support this person. If you don't, you're wasting time and money. And support means you're going to . . . I don't, you know . . . this is the previous Board, the majority of them set here and gave away \$285,000 worth of seed money we had. They eliminated the position, now they're going to put it back. So, why the 180° change all the sudden? We've got to either get serious about this, or quit. We've got to become business friendly. Polk County is not known as a business friendly county. They're going to go to Rutherford County before they come here. So, there's a lot more than just the director. The director is only one small piece. It's what you . . . the ability you give that director, and the support, whether it's going to work or not.

Chair Ambrose: Well, our commission certainly would agree with that sentiment, Tom. Unless we get the right candidate, the right person, as director, and give that person the support that's required to do the job, you waste whatever you spend on it. It is sort of like in for a penny, in for a pound in that case. You've got to provide him with the resources and the moral support, to feel that he's doing the job that the BOC wants him to do. And that's the kind of thing that I think you're asking for Commissioner Owens, is a description of what it is you expect him to accomplish.

Commissioner Walker: Him? Y'all got to quit using those pronouns like that. We don't know who's going to fill that position.

Commissioner Pack: But, that's my big concern. I'm all for the director, but there's a lot that goes along with it and if we're not getting support, we're wasting our time. And, there again, like I said . . .

Commissioner Walker: Where do we start?

Commissioner Pack: Well, I mean, I guess we start by, to me, some explanation of why the 180° turn by the majority of this Board, eliminated the position and now you're back in favor of it. We can't be flip flopping back and forth. You either want the position, you support it, or you don't.

Chair Gasperson: Well, we . . . there was personnel issues that we had to deal with. And, there was a reason why . . . and County Manager can . . . well, that was a lot of closed session issues that I don't know if we can talk about in open session.

Commissioner Pack: Well, personnel don't delete, you don't get rid of the position because you have personnel issues. That's poor management.

Vice-Chair McDermott: You might want to check with the labor lawyer that the County retains to see if you're accurate on that. He told us otherwise.

Commissioner Pack: Told . . .

Vice-Chair McDermott: That was done on the advice of counsel.

Commissioner Pack: Well . . .

Vice-Chair McDermott: And, so I think you need to learn a little bit more about it.

Commissioner Pack: Advice of counsel to eliminate the position?

Vice-Chair McDermott: Yes.

Commissioner Pack: That . . . if you've got a problem with an employee, you don't eliminate their position to get rid of the problem. That's poor management, I don't care what you do. I mean, that's basic business 101. You don't do that. I mean, that's just poor, poor management. So, what you're saying is you really wanted the position, but you got rid of it for personnel issues. Is that what you're saying?

County Manager Whitson: Commissioner Pack, I don't think it was poor management on my part. I don't think we were getting a whole lot for our money at the time, and I'm not saying that it was a personnel issue. The economic times, I don't know that any EDD could have brought anything in here this current year. And, there wasn't money in the budget to support anything. So, I think, on my part anyway, speaking for me as the manager, it was a budgetary issue.

Commissioner Pack: But, you didn't make the decision. I'm asking the ones who made the decision. You either support them or you don't. You got a basic problem here. You can't just flip this thing around and be non-supportive, then be supportive. I mean, we need to make up our minds what we're going to do.

Commissioner Walker: I support an EDD. I've been to both the meetings, and I haven't seen you there, Commissioner Pack. I've talked to these people. I've been collecting my own information. From this day . . . on this day, I support that and I would like to move forward. I totally agree with you that we need to give them the means and the ways in order to make successful this venture, and I am ready to move ahead. And that's my approach from this point forward. I'm ready to move ahead.

Chair Gasperson: Are you making that in the form of a motion?

Commissioner Walker: I will make that in the form of a motion. I support an Economic Development Director for Polk County in next year's budget

Vice-Chair McDermott: Second.

Commissioner Pack: And I have more discussion. What else you going to give this person that you want to hire. How much seed money? I mean, what are you going to give resources to work with? You can't just throw a person out there without the resources.

Commissioner Walker: We've been talking about that at the meetings.

Vice-Chair McDermott: I wish you'd have been at those meetings. At both of those meetings. Especially this morning, because that was discussed in great detail.

Commissioner Walker: And there's a timeline that's been suggested that we would move ahead once this was determined, and that's on this draft page here with a calendar of how that would go exactly. First, you develop a plan, and then you create an implementation team, and create by-laws. And there's lots of things that they've already laid out. And this will tie into our next meeting as far as what we do with tourism, which I have agreed to wait . . . I asked for it to wait for another two weeks so that would not be part of this discussion. But that information is also here so you'll have time to look at that before our next meeting. But, so far, throughout this information we have lots to go with already that they've already put together. And probably more information . . . this will need to be whittled down from this description. And also it will have to be determined about the funding and how

much funding would be in there. So, there is still a lot to do, but I do support going ahead and moving ahead with the position.

Commissioner Pack: If we're talking about it for the budget, and I understand that Ryan already has pretty much put it in his budget for the director.

County Manager Whitson: I've got 50,000 and the FICA budgeted for contract.

Commissioner Pack: But we're talking about seed money. You've got to make those decisions. I mean, how much are you willing to give?

Commissioner Walker: We've got a lot to talk about.

Commissioner Pack: I mean, this is where I'm like Commissioner Owens. We're getting the cart before the horse by giving the position, making the position, before you even know what that person's going to do. And what abilities they're going to have.

Vice-Chair McDermott: Commissioner Pack, you'd know a lot more about it if you had come to those meetings.

Commissioner Owens: Whoa, whoa, wait . . .

Commissioner Pack: I'm not the one that voted to eliminate the position last year, and now you want to turn around and give it lip service and 180°s.

Commissioner Owens: Mr. Chairman

Commissioner Walker: We have a motion, let's call for the . . .

Commissioner Pack: I have met with Ambrose . . .

Commissioner Walker: I call for the question.

Clerk Fehrmann: We have citizen comments.

Chair Gasperson: Is there citizen comments?

Commissioner Owens: Mr. Chairman . . .

Commissioner Pack: I'd like to finish.

Chair Gasperson: Okay, please.

Commissioner Pack: I mean, I'm not out of order. You're the one that made the comment to me I should be at the meetings. I have talked to Ambrose. I have talked to Joe Epley. He knows we've been back and forth on this. I'm not absent on this. But, like I said, we had \$285,000 there before with a successful venture we had with James Tool. And, actually, the County made money on that. That money is gone. We need to put that money or more back before we do . . . along with this position. We've got to become business friendly. We've got to work out the details before we get into actually approving the position.

Chair Gasperson: Commissioner Owens?

Commissioner Owens: I just want to make a point to Commissioner Renée. You know, you have the meetings at 8:30am. I have no problem with that because I don't work. Commissioner Pack runs a company. Hey, if you want to try and get everybody there then you need say, hey, can all of you be there? And then arrange meetings from there. That's unfair to jump him because he can't be there because he runs a company and had a job, and paying my and your Social Security. I appreciate that.

Chair Gasperson: Thank you for saying that.

Vice-Chair McDermott: I'm not on Social Security, sir.

Commissioner Pack: One last comment I'd like to make, too, is the business that we started is in Rutherford County. You want to know why it's in Rutherford County? Because at the time Polk County had nothing to offer us. That's what I'm saying. I know. I'm well experienced with this. I've been on the receiving end. We need to set this up where Polk County is business friendly, otherwise we're wasting all of our time, and the taxpayers' money.

EDC Chair Mills: That's an interesting point, Tom. I appreciate that. You and I have talked together. It's a funny thing. You guys can have a disagreement at the table, but I've talked to each of you and on a personal, one-to-one basis we've agreed on just about every point. What I had hoped to walk away from here today with was an approval of a position. And some of the details and incentives and business friendly things would follow on that, is what I was hoping.

County Manager Whitson: I have a question. Will the goals and things be in the . . . will we include that in the contract? Will the EDC want to include that in a contract with the person that's hired?

EDC Chair Mills: Absolutely. And remember, in our meeting today, we must choose achievable goals. Give the director guidance, the goals, and the resources to achieve them.

County Manager Whitson: Will those resources be in the contract?

EDC Chair Mills: That's difficult to be specific about because what resources are needed to attract Business A is different from Business B. And, as I recall, Tom, I wasn't involved at the time when James Tool came, but the funds that bought that building came out of the general fund. We did not have a economic development fund for that purpose.

Commissioner Pack: That's correct.

EDC Chair Mills: It came out of the general fund which is what, if I had been able to bring you something in this interim, I would have asked for that money out of the general fund. And I think you would have looked at it the same way you did when you approved James Tool.

Commissioner Pack: Well, I think, to give you the support that you need to hire somebody that's going to take this seriously, they need to know what the resources are. They don't need to have . . . well, if I bring the right business, I *may* get some money. What I'm saying is, set aside seed money so they know they have this pot to work with, and they know what the restrictions/limitations are to get monies out of that pot. You have to have something there. And you're right, there wasn't money. With James Tool we bought the building, they paid us a lease for almost three years, then they bought the building back. And the County actually, if you looked at it, we profited on that. And we set that money aside to be able to do the same thing again so there'd be money there. That's what I'm saying. You need to know, I mean, you're going to have a hard time, in my eyes, hiring somebody if you don't have specific guidelines that they know this is what I've got to work with. You're not going to get a professional that's going to come in here. You may hire somebody, but you're not going to hire a professional if they don't know what they have to work with.

Commissioner Walker: Well, wouldn't that be part of the implementation team's work? The implementation team that we talked about? Do you have on for May 2nd that they would start working on that at our next meeting? That was on the calendar. Ms. Jones put that together, I believe.

EDC Chair Mills: Yeah, that presupposed that there would be a position. That's the point I made here. We wanted to have assurance that the BOC supported hiring an EDD. With that assurance we can work out the details that you're asking.

Commissioner Walker: And you had said that perhaps you would put forward a slate of who might be on that implementation team when we discussed that this morning. Perhaps Commissioner Pack would like to be on that team, because I know this is something he's really interested in and, so, some of those descriptions and those allocations and the amounts, he could be a part of planning.

EDC Chair Mills: Well, our plan was for the BOC to appoint that committee.

Commissioner Walker: Right. Well, I'm making that suggestion now for the slate.

EDC Chair Mills: Yeah, sure.

Commissioner Pack: I mean, I guess Ambrose and I are just going to have to agree to disagree. I think we're getting the cart before horse. He knows I support this. But, that would be, in my terms in the business world, of going out and hiring a plant manager or a department head before you know what the responsibilities are going to be and what they have to work with. You can't hire the person with the qualifications unless you know what those qualifications need to be. What they're job's going to be. And I just can't approve it at this time, or vote for it - I'm in support of it - until we know all the details.

Commissioner Walker: I think we're just asking for a holding spot for it. My understanding is in the budgeting process what we're saying is that our . . . jointly I believe we all agree an EDD. And we have a little bit of disagreement as to which comes first, the chicken or the egg, the cart or the horse. What I'm saying is we hold that place. We direct the manager now to hold that place in this budget because we are in agreement that this is something we need, regardless of what happened in the past. It's April 18, 2011. I'm looking forward. And, what are we going to do from here? And, in this year's budget I would like to see it be included that there be an EDD. I don't know the amount right now, and that's part of the implementation team. I'm just saying let's put a holder there for that, is what I'm asking for today with my motion. We're not hiring anyone yet.

Commissioner Pack: I can understand that, but at any point we can make a position and pull the revenues at that point out of the fund balance. It's not that we have to do it today. We can sit here today and say yes, Ambrose, we support you, but we want the details. I think the County Manager will agree with that. That's an approach we can take. I'm just not ready to say \$50,000 or \$55,000 is going to be enough. We don't know what that person's responsibilities are going to be, or what it's going to take. Until you have that person's responsibilities and what you can give them, you can't set the salary or the salary range. It makes no sense. Now, we can all agree to support it. We just need the details before we can go forward with this in my eyes.

Commissioner Owens: Mr. Chairman, I think everybody's hit on it. Ambrose, what you're hearing from us, we support the position. We just don't want to vote that you're going to have that for \$50,000.

Commissioner Walker: I'm not assigning a financial amount to that.

Chair Gasperson: We have a motion and a second on the floor.

EDC Chair Mills: That wasn't really . . . I mean it would be nice to have a number but what I expected out of this afternoon as approval of the position. We don't have that position at the moment.

Vice-Chair McDermott: I ask for citizen comments and call for the question.

Clerk Fehrmann: Ricky McFalls.

Mr. McFalls: Mr. Chairman, what I want to know is we're not company friendly in this County, period. I hadn't heard anybody say we're going to give a tax break to anyone that even thinks about coming in here. Like I say, I've listened to Mr. Owens and Mr. Pack. They've made more sense than anything that's been said here today. You're putting the cart before the horse because you're not getting all of your stuff together. And I'm glad Commissioner McDermott cleared something up for me really good. Said the counsel said get rid of the man that was over the EDC to start with. That made good sense to me. I always wondered why you cut it out. And you was having issues with him. So, thank you so much for clearing the air for me.

Vice-Chair McDermott: If I may correct, I did not say the counsel said to get rid of the person.

Chair Gasperson: Okay, other citizen comment?

Clerk Fehrmann: Sarah Huff.

Ms. Huff: I just want to thank you guys for opening up your eyes for change. And, Cindy, thank you for what you're saying. I think there are people that have heard vague accounts of this going on that have the same concerns that Tom and Ted do because they've seen other things in the past in our County that went awry because there wasn't accountability, or there wasn't the funds, or the funds were cut. So, I hear that and I see that but, it sounds to me like everybody has learned from the past, and they really want a nucleus that will be strong. And you know that if you don't fund it well, the way tourism wasn't funded well, or wasn't implemented, or wasn't accounted for well, we just wasted taxpayer dollars. And there will be really, really a problem as you were all saying. So, if Ambrose has a great program, then vote in principle. At least vote in principle so that people can have hope. And, if you are going to eliminate positions, or restructure underneath it, then meet about it and get clear about it, and realize that we do need to start anew. And we need to forget about all the frustrations of the past. And make people accountable. Look at what the big problems have been, as you've said, and redefine names. If you're going to keep a position in, change the name of the position and get rid of the problem that has caused any other frustrations in the past. And I'm sure Ambrose has this and you all know, but I don't know. If there was a vested management team of business people that could advise, and they had transparency, there probably wouldn't be so much problem. But, an advisory

team that's never really had any power and really couldn't ever do anything about the money? We're powerless. And I think you're saying that.

Chair Gasperson: Thank you for your comments. Any other citizen comments?

Clerk Fehrmann: No.

Chair Gasperson: And, please, right before we vote, I didn't speak earlier. But, indeed, for example, the previous Board moved decisively in helping the restaurant we hope to see out there on Highway 9 by voting to extend that waterline. I can assure you, if we heard of businesses willing to locate there at 74 and 9 we would move decisively to do some matching money to help it get there. We have talked, Ambrose and I, and others, and County Manager, we've talked multiple times about tax incentives that can be given to businesses. The great example over with Facebook in Rutherford where they're giving a significant tax cut on the value of that property, yet they're raising their tax base. If we can do something like this in Polk County I think we have a Board that is willing to move decisively on that. We've talked about the potential of County-owned property that things . . . that businesses . . . buildings can be developed on, perhaps. We've talked about this full spectrum. We are open. We are truly open. This Board, this is probably the most . . . I don't know, it'd be hard to find a Board that has ever sat here that is more open than this Board in moving forward with being as business friendly as this County can possibly be. And, please, I think to make any statements that this Board is not business friendly is a very incorrect statement. Because, in these economic times, we're going to do everything to bring on businesses that suit Polk County. Reality is, this County is very suited for the small entrepreneurial business. It's unlikely that we're going to see the big manufacturing plant. We simply don't have the infrastructure. It would be, perhaps . . . I don't know if it's possible to bring on the big plant. I don't know if the citizens, indeed, really want that. But, what we want to see is those four or five, ten, fifteen, employee type businesses, such as James Tool. And I applaud the previous Board who worked and pulled that money from fund balance to make that happen. This Board, I'm convinced, would move forward and do things such as that. So, any other comments? If not, we have the question. All in favor?

Commissioner Walker: Aye.

Vice-Chair McDermott: Aye.

Commissioner Pack: Mr. Chairman, have them restate the motion.

Chair Gasperson: Okay.

Commissioner Pack: To verify what it was.

Chair Gasperson: Restate the motion.

Commissioner Walker: I move that we plan for an Economic Development Director in next year's budget.

Commissioner Owen: I have one question.

Chair Gasperson: Okay, one question.

Commissioner Owens: That doesn't mean that you're agreeing with the County Manager's budget.

Commissioner Walker: I'm not assigning any dollar amount to that.

Chair Gasperson: Okay, so we have that as the motion . . .

Commissioner Pack: If you'd clarify that there is no monies . . .

Commissioner Walker: I'm not attaching any money so far to that. I want that position for next year. We'll work on that.

Chair Gasperson: And we have . . .

Vice-Chair McDermott: A second.

Chair Gasperson: Still a second for that motion. Okay. No other comments? All in favor? (End verbatim.)

The motion carried unanimously.

It was the consensus of the Board for Chair Gasperson and Commissioner Pack to serve on the economic development implementation team.

15. County Manager's Report – a) Commissioner Owens made a motion to approve the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council 2010-2011 Polk County Plan, seconded by Commissioner Pack and the motion carried unanimously. b) Ken Shull, CEO of St. Luke's Hospital, recently informed County Manager Whitson of the hospital's plans to improve/expand its facility. The project cost is estimated at \$6 million and would create eight jobs. The hospital has asked the County to consider transferring the deed from the County to the St. Luke's Foundation, a 501(c)3 corporation, to enable funds to be secured for this project. Commissioner Pack asked what financial exposure Carolinas HealthCare System of Charlotte, St. Luke's management company, would have and County Manager Whitson said it would be very limited, or non-existent. County Attorney Egan was instructed to research the disposition of County property. Commissioner Owens reminded everyone that the hospital was built with taxpayers' money and it does belong to the County. Mr. Shull will be asked to attend the May 16, 2011, BOC meeting to discuss the St. Luke's project in more detail.

Citizen Comments – Katharine Smith implored the Board to determine the value of the property and buildings before making a decision on this issue.

16. Volunteer Boards for Vote – Paper ballots were completed and the following individuals were appointed to their respective boards unanimously: Council on Aging – Margaret Kell and Margaret Wyllie; Library Board of Trustees – Charles Fousek; Recycling Board - Mary Parker
17. Volunteer Board for Review – An application for Region C Workforce Development was reviewed.
18. Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items – There were no comments.
19. Commissioner Comments – Commissioner Owens said he is always for an EDD because Polk County is very much in need of economic development. Commissioners Walker and Pack thanked everyone for coming out. Vice-Chair McDermott thanked everyone for coming out, and said she is glad the Board voted

in favor of the EDD position. Chair Gasperson agreed with Vice-Chair McDermott, and said he is optimistic regarding economic development in Polk County.

20. Adjournment – Commissioner Walker made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:

POLK COUNTY BOARD
OF COMMISSIONERS

Beth Fehrmann
Clerk to the Board

Ray Gasperson
Chair