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**Minutes**  
**Cumberland County Board of Commissioners**  
**September 5, 2000, 9:00 a.m.**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Courthouse, Room 118**  
**Fayetteville, NC**  
Corrected

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**PRESENT:** Chairman Edward G. Melvin, Jr.  
Vice Chairman J. Lee Warren, Jr.  
Commissioner Talmage Baggett  
Commissioner Breeden Blackwell  
Commissioner Jeannette Council  
Commissioner Billy R. King  
Commissioner H. Mac Tyson II  
Cliff Strassenburg, County Manager  
James Martin, Deputy County Manager  
Juanita Pilgrim, Asst. County Manager  
Cliff Spiller, Asst. County Manager  
Grainger Barrett, County Attorney  
Marsha Fogle, Clerk to the Board

**INVOCATION:** Commissioner J. Lee Warren  
Rev. Father Dimitrios Moraitis of Saints  
Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**MOTION:** Commissioner Tyson moved to follow staff recommendations on the items on the Consent Agenda.

**SECOND:** Commissioner Council

**VOTE:** UNANIMOUS

**1. CONSENT AGENDA**

**A. Approval of Minutes: August 21, 2000**

**ACTION:** Approve

**B. Approval of Cape Fear Valley Health System FY01 Operating and Capital Budgets**

**ACTION:** Approve

**C. Approval of bid award for Refurbishing Seating in the Cumberland County Memorial Auditorium**

**BACKGROUND:** On August 21, 2000 a bid was received to refurbish the seating in the Memorial Auditorium. American Office Services bid \$168,840. This bid is less than the amount budgeted for the project.

**ACTION:** Award the bid to American Office Services in the amount of \$168,840.

#### **D. Approval of Interlocal Agreement with the Town of Linden for Administration of County Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance within the Town Limits**

**BACKGROUND:** Currently, the Town does not participate in the National Flood Insurance Program and their residents are not eligible to purchase flood insurance nor can the Town receive Federal flood disaster relief funds. The Town has applied for inclusion in the NFIP and adopted the County's Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance to meet the Floodplain Management Ordinance requirements of this Federal Program. However, the Town does not have the resources to administer and enforce the Ordinance and it is requesting the County to provide this service through an Interlocal Agreement. The County Engineering Department administers the County's floodplain management regulations and inclusion of the Town of Linden would not present an undue burden on the staff. The County will retain all fees provided by Ordinance for such service.

**ACTION:** Approve the Interlocal Agreement.

#### **E. Approval of Contract Amendment for Upgrade of Finance Department Accounting Standards Software**

**BACKGROUND:** The Board of Commissioners approved a budget revision October 18, 1999, appropriating funds for the purchase or upgrade of financial software to comply with the new Governmental Accounting Standards Board State (GASB) 34. In addition, the procurement of new software was discussed by the Personnel Committee on December 15, 1999, in conjunction with a reorganization in the Finance Department due to this new accounting standard. Since that time, the Finance Department and Information Services have been evaluating the avenues available for procuring or upgrading our existing software. The search was centered around software that will run on our existing IBM mainframe computer and software that will provide a comprehensive solution integrating the financial, payroll and personnel functions. It has been concluded that in order to ensure compatibility with the existing system, an upgrade of our current product is the most prudent solution. The upgrade will improve efficiency, enhance functionality and streamline processing, while also achieving the automation and integration of the payroll and Human Resource functions. Since we are upgrading our current licensed software due to compatibility issues, the County Attorney advises that a request for proposals is not necessary.

**ACTION:** Approve a contract amendment for the upgrade of Financial Accounting Standards Software contingent upon review and consent of the County Attorney, County Manager and Finance Director.

#### **F. Report of Formal Bid Awards Less than \$100,000 approved by Management**

**BACKGROUND:** The County Manager awarded the following bid:

Roll-off container truck for the Solid Waste Management Department on August 22, 2000 to Carolina Environmental in the amount of \$95,723.

The following bids were received:

Carolina Environmental	\$95,723
AMICK	\$98,375
Cavalier Equipment	\$96,000
Smith International	\$99,266.39
Triad Mack	\$101,604
Volvo, GMC Truck Center	\$98,375
Tom Bailey Motors	\$99,434.32

#### **G. Budget Revisions:**

(1) **Register of Deeds: Revision in the amount of \$1,457 to appropriate fund balance to increase salaries for two employees based on their certification as Deputy Register of Deeds (B01-095) Funding Source – County**

(2) **Mental Health: Increase in revenue/expenditures in the amount of \$251,223 to fund six new positions and operating expenditures for the new Family Preservation Program (B01-128) Funding Source – State**

(3) **General Government Other: Revision in the amount of \$10,000 to appropriate fund balance to rebudget unexpended prior approved expenditures from FY2000 (B01-129) Funding Source – County**

**ACTION:** Approve

## **REGULAR AGENDA**

### **2. Consideration of submitting 2001 Legislative Goals to the NC Association of County Commissioners**

**BACKGROUND:** The NC Association of County Commissioners is soliciting proposed legislative goals for the 2001 Session of the General Assembly.

**ACTION:** Determine what goals the Board desires to submit to the Association.

**MOTION:** **Commissioner Blackwell moved to send the following goals to the NC Association of County Commissioners:**

- **Endorse an increase in the local option sales tax;**
- **Give counties additional means of generating revenues and endorse the re-institution of state funding of local school system utility costs;**
- **Endorse requiring a county where a special needs student has his or her permanent residence pay tuition to a receiving school system in another county when that student enrolls in that other county's school system;**
- **Endorse continued progress toward funding teacher salaries at the national average or better;**
- **Endorse new funding formula for low-wealth counties to increase the state's funding of school systems in those counties;**

**SECOND:** Commissioner King

**DISCUSSION:** Commissioner Tyson said he could not support the motion unless we offered to reduce county property taxes by a specific amount, once the sales tax is approved. Commissioner Blackwell noted that the Board of Commissioners needs to contact each of our legislators to find out where they stand on the local option sales tax. Commissioner Warren noted the Senate was in favor of the local option sales tax. Commissioner Warren said this Board cannot bind a future Board of Commissioners. He also said he thought it unfair for this Board to put parameters on the motion such as reducing property taxes if the sales tax passes. He also said he is sure it is the intent of this Board to reduce property taxes as much as possible. Commissioner Blackwell reminded the Board if the state school bond issue passes, it will take a \$23 million county match. Chairman Melvin requested that we forward the above goals to Chambers of Commerce, Boards of other municipalities and counties, and Economic Development Boards to urge them to support the above legislative goals.

**VOTE: FAVOR: Commissioners Blackwell, Melvin, Warren, Baggett, King, and Council**

**OPPOSED: Commissioner Tyson**

### 3. Report on the economic impact of the Homeowner's Industry in Cumberland County

Dr. Sid Gautam, Director, Center for Entrepreneurship at Methodist College, reported that the housing industry, the largest industry in Cumberland County, is in crisis. He concludes that Cumberland County has had a property tax loss in the amount of \$23,889,277.20 since 1993 with 22,456 jobs lost as a result of the 1993 changes incorporated into the Subdivision Regulations of Cumberland County.

Commissioner Warren said he thought that no single action taken by the Board of Commissioners has had more impact than inclusion of the urban service area in the Subdivision Ordinance passed in 1993. He noted the decline of home building starts from 2300 in 1993 to 700 in 1999. He also noted that in the same period of time Hoke and Harnett counties, adjacent to us, have enjoyed and increase in new homes. He said this is one of the most important issues we will address for a long time.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Warren moved to rescind the urban service area requirements.

**SECOND:** Chairman Melvin

**DISCUSSION:** Commissioner Blackwell said he thought this presentation was for information purposes only, and he was not comfortable in making a decision on this issue today. He said he would like to look at the big picture and hear the other side of the story. He said he believed the Board would need more information before such a major step is taken. Commissioner King said he supported the urban services area with the idea that it would improve the quality of life for our citizens. Commissioner Warren noted that Chairman Melvin seconded his motion before he had completed it and said he would put it on the Agenda for action on September 18. He said he would like to allow for some time for public comment, however not necessarily in the form of a Public Hearing. It was suggested that the Policy Committee take a look at it and make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. It was also noted that the Planning Board is having a Public Hearing tonight at which time this issue will be discussed. Jeannette Council suggested that in order to give the Policy Committee a chance to look at it on September 21, we delay any Board action until October 2. Commissioner Warren said he would agree to delay Board action until the October 2, 2000 meeting.

**VOTE:** UNANIMOUS

Commissioner Blackwell said it important that we learn all we can about this issue so the Board can see the "big picture".

Cliff Strassenburg stated that in his Economics 101 he learned there are two kinds of jobs, i.e., basic jobs and service jobs. He said instead of an "industry in crisis", we are an "economy in crisis". He said basic jobs are created as a result of the investment of new capital into local economies. Service jobs are a recirculation of capital. He noted that what we need is new industry. He said while it is true there has been a reduction of construction of new homes, causes are greater than development requirements. He noted that in looking back over the last few years the military has remained constant, however we have lost some major employers in this county (Mid South and NC Natural Gas to name a couple) and there have been consolidations in the banking industry causing middle management positions to be lost. He pointed out that in tracing revenues from the Prepared Food and Beverage Tax there is a growth of only three tenths of a percent. He noted that home construction is up in Wake County as a result of the Research Triangle Park expanding, not necessarily because of development standards. He suggested that things are going to get tough and we need to develop a "strategic plan" to grow our economy while maintaining reasonable development standards to assure quality of life for our citizens. He urged the Board to look at the "big picture" and that there be some serious community-wide strategic planning.

### 4. Consideration of County Manager's Position

Commissioner King noted that the citizens of Cumberland County have known for awhile that Cliff Strassenburg would be retiring. He noted that Cliff would be difficult to replace. He said from newspaper reports it appears that at least 4 commissioners have decided to support Mr. James Martin for the job. He said the obvious question is “is he the best the marketplace has to offer”? He said we don’t know unless we look. Commissioner King said he supports a national search for the next county manager of Cumberland County. He said the world is rapidly changing and we in government need to change with it. The hospital system just recently hired a new CEO, Richard Parks, after a national search. He asked his fellow commissioners to consider the following:

- there is no great rush, Martin can serve as interim manager or we can twist Cliff’s arm;
- two of the four commissioners ready to appoint Martin will leave the Board in the next 90 days;
- to a minimum, there will be two new board members in December, should they have a say?
- Commissioner Council was just sworn in and may be called upon to make a major decision after just barely meeting Martin.

Mr. King said the choosing of the next county manager should be a serious and well thought-out process. We don’t need a quick count. He said this is a major league decision and it should be taken to the major league level.

Commissioner Baggett said the appointment of a new county manager is the most important task this Board will undertake. He thanked Cliff Strassenburg for his dedication and years of service to the County. He noted the County must move forward and the appointment of the new manager is solely the responsibility of this Board of Commissioners, not the province of a future Board whose composition is unknown and experience unproved or the Chamber of Commerce or editorial writers of the local press. He said the responsibility is ours alone. He said the Board of Commissioners is directly accountable to the taxpayers in a most direct manner, though elections. He said Mr. Martin is the right person, in the right spot at the right time. He said Mr. Martin deserves the confidence and support of all his colleagues. He said the appointment has been earned and is well deserved and in the best interest of this County.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Baggett moved to hire James Martin as county manager, effective October 1, 2000 and that the salary issue be referred to the County Personnel Committee with a report back to the full Board of Commissioners on September 18, 200.

**SECOND:** Commissioner Blackwell

**DISCUSSION:** Commissioner King said if he were Mr. Martin he would want to know how he stacks up against other applicants. He said we are not doing our jobs if we do not have a national search. Commissioner Blackwell said he has talked to many people in the community, and the Board will not make everyone happy, no matter what we do. He said James can’t win either way, if we appoint him today, the thought will be “the good old boy system is working” and if we have a national search and hire him anyway, the thought will be “they already had their mind may up”, which would not be the case. Mr. Blackwell listed some of the following reasons to hire Mr. Martin, i.e., 30 years experience in city and county government, deputy finance director – City of Fayetteville; management experience; he is currently the number two man here, heavily involved in decisions; he has been the manager of two counties in North Carolina (Hoke and Robeson); he merged five school systems in Robeson County; and did research and provided critical information when Cumberland County was considering privatization of the landfill. Mr. Blackwell noted that Mr. Martin was very loyal to Mr. Strassenburg and sensitive not to take off on a path of his own. Mr. Blackwell said the doubting Thomases should give Mr. Martin an opportunity to lead this County. He challenged Mr. Martin to bring to this Board a plan for the County’s future that will “knock our socks off”. Commissioner Jeannette Council said continuity is important and she would hope that we will take some of the money we would have used in a national search to develop a strategic plan that will give our departments some sense of what they can count on from the County in the next two years. She said we need the plan “sooner” rather than “later”. Commissioner Warren noted that when the Board of Commissioners established the position of deputy county manager it was

done with the intention of filling the position with someone who would be able to move into the county manager position when Mr. Strassenburg retires. Mr. Martin has been the Deputy County Manager since May, 1995 and has earned the right to step into this position. Commissioner Warren noted the importance of developing internal depth of management with staff that can step into key management positions, as opposed to having to look outside all of the time. He said we have someone here, James Martin, who can step into that position. Commissioner Warren noted his first meeting with James Martin was at the Institute of Government when Mr. Martin was accompanying new commissioners from Robeson County and when he was attending the New Commissioners' School. He noted the positive impression that Mr. Martin made upon him at that time. Commissioner King noted that his preference for a national search is not at all a personal thing, but instead he feels it is the thing to do. While he still prefers a national search, Commissioner Warren said he would support James Martin fully as County Manager.

**VOTE: FAVOR: Commissioners Blackwell, Warren, Tyson, Baggett and Council  
OPPOSED: Commissioner King**

Following the vote, Chairman Ed Melvin inquired of the county attorney if his vote on this issue would constitute a conflict of interest for him (He and Mr. Martin are cousins). The County Attorney indicated to Chairman Melvin he could legally vote on this issue. Chairman Melvin then cast his vote in favor of the motion.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 10:45AM