

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING WITH HOPE MILLS TOWN BOARD**

**APRIL 29, 2002, 6:30 PM
HOPE MILLS TOWN HALL**

**PRESENT: Chairman, Breeden Blackwell
Vice Chairman Talmage Baggett
Commissioner Jeannette Council
Commissioner Kenneth Edge
Commissioner John T. Henley
Commissioner Billy R. King
Commissioner J. Lee Warren, Jr.
Members, Hope Mills Town Board
James Martin, County Manager
Juanita Pilgrim, Deputy County Manager
Cliff Spiller, Assistant County Manager
Grainger Barrett, County Attorney
Karen Brady, CC Recreation Dept.
Rhonda R. Britt, Deputy Clerk
Tonya Harris-Council, Pubic Info. Dir.
Tom Lloyd, Interim Planning Director
Charles Whittenton, SWM Director
Nena Wilson, Community Dev. Director
Hope Mills Staff**

Chairman Blackwell and Mayor Deaver called their respective Boards to order.

Mayor Deaver welcomed the Board of Commissioners to Hope Mills and stated this meeting helps to continue efforts of communication and working together. He asked if any of the Hope Mills Commissioners had any concerns they wished to express.

Town Commissioner Bill Luther noted his concern about some property next to the Hope Mills Town limits that is located at the intersection of George Owen and Camden roads. There is a huge junkyard on the premises and when it rains the drainage from the property feeds into a creek that runs into Hope Mills lake.

Tom Lloyd, Interim County Planning Director advised the owner of the property on which a salvage yard is run, has been cited. The owner recently appeared before the Board of Adjustment to ask for a variance as a result of a citation. The request wad denied by the Board of Adjustment. The owner now has approximately 90 days to remove one-half of

the cars on the property.

Town Commissioner Roy Stallings asked what the life span was for the landfill at Ann Street. He also asked about convenience sites for recycling.

Charles Whittenton, Solid Waste Management Director advised the expected life of the Ann Street landfill is 17 years. Municipalities can haul recyclable goods to the landfill for disposal. He then noted the location of the container sites throughout the County as well what items are taken for recycling at those sites. He presented a handout to each Hope Mills Commissioner. He then noted everyone in the County lives within six miles of a convenience site.

Chairman Blackwell noted Mr. Whittenton appears on the next segment of Cumberland County Showcase and discusses the convenience sites and what citizens can take to those sites for disposal.

Commissioner Baggett noted his concern with annexation by the City of Fayetteville and its affects on the Town of Hope Mills. He noted his concern about the Gates Four subdivision and its annexation into the City of Fayetteville. The Gates Four community has kinship with Hope Mills and it seems logical to him that this area should be annexed by Hope Mills.

Commissioner Baggett stated that he would also like to discuss Parks and Recreation. He noted the reputation of the Hope Mills recreation programs and the wonderful participation it has. He stated he would like to know the Town's feelings about the merger of the City of Fayetteville and County Parks and Recreation.

Commissioner Edge stated he does not want to speak for his neighborhood, but it is his understanding that a letter has been mailed from the Gates Four community requesting that the Town of Hope Mills annex it. They feel annexation by Hope Mills would be a better fit in that it has more identity with Hope Mills.

Hope Mills Planning Director Roy Taylor advised this issue has been an ongoing process and they have been working with the City of Fayetteville. The Gates Four Homeowners Association has requested that Gates Four be annexed by Hope Mills. A vote on the matter has been taken by the Hope Mills Planning Board. It will now go to the City of Fayetteville. There has been a suggestion that this area be a "hands off" area for Hope Mills and Fayetteville, as is the case with some industrial properties. He is not sure that will happen. The next step is the meeting with the City of Fayetteville Planning Board.

Commissioner Baggett expressed his concern that the County and Town of Hope Mills do not have voting representation on the PWC Commission. He noted the annexation requirement for areas outside the City that request services from PWC. He feels they need to do something about this situation.

Mr. Taylor stated he feels PWC has become more of a regional entity. He noted problems with commercial areas that are not in Hope Mills or Fayetteville and the difficulty they are having in obtaining services from PWC at a reasonable price. He feels this problem should be carried to the Fayetteville City Council.

Commissioner Baggett stated they must work and stand together to have some influence in this matter.

Town Commissioner Stallings stated the Town is undergoing a feasibility study on parks and recreation. Currently, Hope Mills citizens are paying approximately \$280,000 each year to the County for recreation services. It appears they may be paying for services provided to other areas of the County.

Mr. Taylor advised the Town is working on a plan for recreation. To this point, there has been no plan. They need one to guide growth and determine how the .5 cent levy by the County is being spent.

Chairman Blackwell asked why they had not discussed this issue earlier since there seems to be a problem.

Town Manager Rodney Johnson stated there has been "public rumblings" about the funds being paid by the citizens of Hope Mills. The study will help the Town look at the funds and what they want their parks and recreation to look like. They currently don't have anything to take to County staff to discuss. When the Town knows what it wants they will discuss the matter with the County. The figures have been difficult to determine.

Karen Brady of the County Parks and Recreation Department advised the last set of figures were sent to the Town of Hope Mills about one year ago. The County department works regionally. The entire region uses the facilities so it is hard to determine how much time certain staff people spend at different facilities.

Commissioner Warren stated that Hope Mills is a strong sports and recreation community. All the County wants is an opportunity to be responsive to needs. He asked that the Hope Mills Board give the County a chance to talk about any problems and be

given an opportunity to fix them and do what is best for the County and Hope Mills. He noted the County is more than willing to make this work.

Commissioner Edge noted he has served as the Liaison to the Recreation Department for almost two years. He has learned that sometimes problems arise when you have different groups operating programs with different rules. He also stated he would like Hope Mills to give the County a chance to work out any problems. He noted that Hope Mills is represented on the Recreation Advisory Board. He hopes the Town Board would look at the things that have come to Hope Mills such as lighting of fields. He also noted that the Town would have two recreation facilities if it annexed Jack Britt and Stoney Point schools which are just outside the Town's limits.

County Manager James Martin advised that the City of Fayetteville and County staffs have had several meetings regarding the merger of the two Parks and Recreation departments. Hope Mills and the other municipalities will be invited to participate in the conversations. The City of Fayetteville has had to determine their costs. They are also working with Phil Boyle of the Institute of Government to assist in facilitating the discussions.

Commissioner Henley noted that it will always be the case that the higher density areas will pay more in any tax or fees. If these areas choose not to participate then it puts pressure on the County to continue similar programs for the rest of the County. These issues speak dramatically for county-wide planning. They need more planning in the broad sense. If there is an issue to be discussed they could have a group to address it. The "fair share" issue could be applied to any service. It comes down to how to best spend the available dollars. They need to prioritize and use resources as well as they can. Planning needs to involve other entities. He would encourage planning together and looking at how decisions affect other areas.

Chairman Blackwell noted he would like to discuss all issues. It is unfair to the County if they are not given the chance to change things. He wants the Town to know the County respects its independence.

Mayor Deaver stated the Parks and Recreation study will help them to see where the Town is and where it is going. He is glad to hear about the recreation centers in the schools that are available.

Town Commissioner Eddie Maynor stated they all must look at better ways to deliver services. They need to look at where tax dollars are going such as education and the criminal element. The Town needs to see the results of the Parks and Recreation study

and determine what needs to be fixed.

Commissioner Baggett noted that no one likes the fact that a jail or social services building is needed. The County had to have both facilities. He noted the number of jail breaks in Sampson County in a short period of time. The reality is that there are people that have to be in jail and the State tells us how they will be housed. The County does spend a lot of money on schools and it is still not at the state average. Jails, schools and social services must be provided.

Chairman Blackwell noted that when mergers are considered there is a perception that money will be saved. However, the focus should be on the delivery of services and how to better deliver them rather than the cost factor. The County's current jail has between 50 and 60 prisoners on pallets on the floor each night. The conditions are deplorable and dangerous.

Mayor Deaver noted the Hope Mills Youth Association, which is very active, will be considered when the Parks and Recreation study is done.

The Hope Mills Board adjourned its meeting.

The meeting of the Board of Commissioners continued into the Public Hearing scheduled for 7:30 PM. The minutes of that hearing are recorded in a separate document.

Deputy Clerk

**CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL MEETING: TOWN HALL MEETING FOR
RESIDENTS IN THE TOWN OF HOPE MILLS
APRIL 29, 2002, 7:30 PM
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PRESENT: Chairman, Breeden Blackwell
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Chairman Blackwell opened the Public Hearing. He advised the purpose of this meeting was for the Board of Commissioners to receive comment from citizens in the Hope Mills area about any issue or concern they wish to bring to the attention of the Board.

SPEAKERS:

1. David Stafford, Hope Mills Finance Director: Noted one item he wished to discuss was recreation. He feels the recreation tax is inequitable and the Hope Mills residents subsidize the County's general fund for recreation. He has asked for statements about what the County provides in Hope Mills. The citizens of Hope Mills know what they are paying, but they cannot tell what they are getting for the money. He noted a recreation center is in Stoney Point and Grays Creek, but there isn't one in Hope Mills. No one wanted to discuss the merger with Hope Mills. It seems that the County already has money from Hope Mills and now wants to get money from the City of Fayetteville. He does not believe he should have to subsidize recreation services for county residents. He then asked about the moving of an ambulance at a fire station near his home. He stated he was told it moved to another fire station because it had a big screen TV and lounge chairs.

Commissioner Blackwell advised Mr. Stafford that the hospital system operates the ambulance service at a loss of \$5 million dollars per year. Wade, Falcon and Godwin do

not have ambulances at the fire stations in those areas. He advised him that no person in authority told him that the ambulance was moved because of a TV and lounge chairs. He has made a serious accusation.

Mr. Stafford advised he understood this was a time to voice his opinions and that is what he was doing.

Commissioner Baggett advised Mr. Stafford that the hospital system was conducting a study on how to best deliver ambulance services throughout the County. That has resulted in the movement of ambulances to different locations. Ambulances would not be moved because of TV's and lounge chairs. The factor in moving an ambulance location is the time factor to get to all areas as quickly as possible. He also advised that due to additional Medicaid reimbursements, the hospital system would be able to purchase two additional units. He noted the high cost to operate each unit.

Mr. Stafford also stated that he is concerned with the amount of fund balance carried by some fire departments. He feels it is unfair for some departments to have very little money and others to have huge amounts of money in the bank. He is also concerned about mutual aid agreements and the way they are handled.

Commissioner Baggett advised that the mission of local fire departments is sometimes misunderstood. The 10 cent levy is voted on and imposed on the citizens in the areas themselves. The volunteer pool has dried up and these departments have had to hire full-time staff to man these stations. Some departments have been taken over by the City of Fayetteville or had their revenue source reduced by annexation. He does not feel fire departments are getting over on people. However, some have more income than others. He then invited Mr. Stafford to attend a Fire Chiefs meeting to discuss the matter directly with the Fire Chiefs.

Mr. Stafford again stated he feels some fire department funds are excessive and should be looked into.

Commissioner Baggett stated having a fund balance is not a bad thing and is required by the Local Government Commission.

Commissioner Warren noted the fund balances of fire departments have been a concern for many years. It does not seem fair that some departments have over one million in the bank while others are struggling to keep the lights on. The money collected by the fire departments is spent only in that district. There is also an equity issue about taking funds from one district and using it to subsidize another district. He noted some

counties have fire administrators that assist with the purchase of equipment, etc.

Commissioner asked Mr. Stafford about the figures he had requested from the County Parks and Recreation Department.

Mr. Stafford advised he has asked the County Parks and Recreation Department for the information about what is spent in Hope Mills. He received information from 1995 and also received monthly reports that do not reflect the amount of money spent in the town limits of Hope Mills. It only indicates the number of people served.

Commissioner Edge asked Mr. Stafford to provide him with his request and he will try to help him get the information.

Commissioner Council stated the County wants to provide the best that it can for all its citizens. The County is diverse and there are special needs. Their goal is to provide the best services possible. They must look at the County as a whole.

Chairman Blackwell noted the quarterly meetings with the Mayors and noted that the Hope Mills Board could relay information through their Mayor via these meetings if they wished to do so.

Chairman Blackwell thanked everyone for their attendance and participation.

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Deputy Clerk