

CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
MARCH 11, 2014 – 5:00 PM  
117 DICK STREET, 5<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR, ROOM 564  
SPECIAL MEETING  
MINUTES

PRESENT: Commissioner Jeannette Council, Chair  
Commissioner Kenneth Edge, Vice Chair  
Commissioner Charles Evans  
Commissioner Marshall Faircloth  
Commissioner Jimmy Keefe  
Commissioner Billy King (departed at 5:55 p.m.)  
Commissioner Ed Melvin  
James Lawson, Assistant County Manager  
Julean Self, Human Resources Assistant Director  
James Mercer, The Mercer Group  
Ellis Hankins, The Mercer Group  
Candice White, Clerk to the Board  
Press

Commissioner Council called the meeting to order and stated the purpose of the meeting was to enter into discussion with The Mercer Group regarding the recruitment of a new county manager and the search process timeline moving forward.

James Mercer, The Mercer Group, provided opening remarks and introduced Ellis Hankins of The Mercer Group. Mr. Hankins stated the meetings with individual commissioners earlier in the day were productive in that they brought forward characteristics and qualifications that commissioners believed they and the citizens of Cumberland County needed in the person appointed as county manager. Mr. Hankins stated the appointment of the county manager will be the Board of Commissioners' decision and The Mercer Group will provide information and advice throughout the process. Mr. Hankins stressed the importance of strict confidentiality of information to protect the integrity of the process and to maintain the confidence applicants. Mr. Hankins also stressed the importance of the Board being open-minded throughout the process.

Chairman Council noted The Mercer Group would engage in discussion with groups of county department heads on March 12<sup>th</sup> to get some general ideas about qualifications, traits, experience and backgrounds they believed the Board of Commissioners should consider.

Chairman Council called attention to the suggested timeline for the search process dated February 18<sup>th</sup> and discussion followed. Mr. Hankins explained how the modified assessments centers would be conducted with finalist candidates and the administration of personality profile instruments on selected candidates. Mr. Mercer suggested the Board allow one and one-half hours for each candidate interview and stated The Mercer Group will provide information, interview guides and evaluation forms for the Board. Mr. Hankins stated The Mercer Group believes it is important that all Board members have the same information on applicants who are being considered and makes a decision on that basis.

Mr. Hankins stated several Board members mentioned that they prefer to get through this process in an orderly way and as expeditiously as reasonably possible, while still allowing the time needed at significant periods during the process. Mr. Hankins stated the schedule is deliberately laid out in order to move the process and the Board forward towards several significant decision points. Mr. Hankins stated The Mercer Group hopes to enable the Board to have a well qualified next county manager in place by July 1, 2014; however, a lot of things can happen throughout the process that can alter that date. Mr. Hankins stated the next manager's start date will likely depend on the circumstances of that individual's current employment.

Commissioner Faircloth inquired regarding the impact a strong in-house candidate would have on the number and quality of the applicants. Mr. Mercer stated The Mercer Group recommends that in-house candidates are run through the same screens as external candidates so the Board will have the same information for internal candidates as for external candidates. Mr. Mercer stated the Board can definitely appoint an internal candidate if they have the necessary qualifications. Mr. Mercer stated should something occur within two years after the Board

appoints the county manager, The Mercer Group will work to find a replacement for expenses only. Mr. Mercer stated The Mercer Group does not want the Board to get into a situation where it selects a candidate that does not meet the qualifications. Mr. Mercer stated qualifications will be in a set of criteria placed in the recruitment brochure, which the Board will review before it is disseminated. Mr. Mercer stated The Mercer Group can only advise because the Board is the decision maker. Mr. Hankins stated a lot of city and county managers know each other and news travels, and many will talk about this position because it will viewed as an attractive position. Mr. Hankins stated if there is a strong internal candidates, some of the potential applicants will be aware of that and it may factor into their decision to apply. Chairman Council and Commissioner Faircloth concurred that the process needs to be open and potential candidates need to be aware of this.

Discussion continued regarding the suggested timeline and significant steps involved in the process. There was consensus for the Board to interview candidates on June 2 and June 3, with a June 2 briefing by The Mercer Group around 10:45 a.m., one interview beginning around 11:00 a.m. and two interviews in the afternoon.

MOTION: Commissioner Edge moved to adjourn.  
SECOND: Commissioner Evans  
VOTE: UNANIMOUS (6-0)

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Approved with/without revision:

Respectfully submitted,

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Candice White  
Clerk to the Board