

CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
JUNE 30, 2003, 6:30PM
SPECIAL MEETING
TOWNS OF FALCON, GODWIN & WADE

PRESENT: Chairman Talmage S. Baggett, Jr.
Vice Chairman Jeannette Council
Commissioner Kenneth S. Edge
Commissioner Breeden Blackwell
Commissioner John Henley
Commissioner Billy King
Commissioner Edward G. Melvin
James Martin, County Manager
Juanita Pilgrim, Deputy County Manager
Amy Cannon, Asst. County Manager
Mitzi Champion, Public Information Officer
Grainger Barrett, County Attorney
Ann Hymes, Deputy Clerk
Marsha Fogle, Clerk
Mayor Huell Aekins – Town of Wade
Commissioner Grace Heath – Town of Wade
Commissioner Raymond Edwards – Town of Wade
Commissioner Joseph Dixon – Town of Wade
Mayor Deborah Tew, Town of Godwin
Commissioner Bobby Johnson – Town of Godwin
Commissioner Mack Royal – Town of Godwin
Mayor Wayne Lucas – Town of Falcon
OTHERS: County Staff

The purpose of this Special Meeting is to allow the Boards in Falcon, Godwin and Wade to discuss any governmental concerns with the Board of Commissioners.

Chairman Baggett called the meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order. Mayor Tew called the Town of Godwin Board to order. Mayor Aekins called the Town of Wade Board to order. A quorum was not present for the Falcon Town Board.

Ambulance Service:

Mayor Aekins, Town of Wade, inquired about the ambulance service and its status. Chairman Baggett noted the ambulance service is losing \$4.2 million a year. He said there are three options currently under consideration: (1) no change; (2) contracting with Rural Metro; and (3) contracting with the Fire Departments to provide the service. Requests for Proposals are being prepared and will be forwarded to the fire departments and Rural Metro for response. Chairman Baggett noted that not every fire department is interested in providing ambulance service because of the cost to them and lack of qualified EMT's. Commissioner Henley noted the Hospital Board of Trustees has only approved evaluating whether or not the ambulance service should go to another provider. He said his sense is that the fire departments are moving away from assuming full response; however, they do want to be a part of the system and have some input. Commissioner Henley said at no time will the hospital consider any decrease in ambulance service to the citizens of the county. Wally Ainsworth, Director, Ambulance Service, stated the hospital has hired a consulting firm to help write a bid for services. In response to a question, Mr. Ainsworth, noted the current budget for the ambulance service is a little less than \$6 million a year. Mayor Lucas, Town of Falcon, noted that the Charter for the Godwin Falcon Fire Department did not address fire and rescue and it may have to be amended to include rescue if the department elects to get into the ambulance business. He also noted that many of the fire departments do not have enough volunteers present during the day to provide adequate service. In addition volunteers are not EMT's. Mayor Lucas also noted that towns that are located off the interstate are essentially providing service to interstate accidents with no reimbursement.

Commissioner Blackwell said that a lot of misinformation is being circulated about this matter. He noted it is a big issue. He said that if the ambulance service is awarded to another provider, it would have to take the entire package to include billing and collecting. He noted that the local collection rate for ambulance bills is about 26 – 30 cents on the dollar, while the collection rate for a national company is 50 cents on the dollar.

Commissioner Blackwell also noted it is time to look at the allocation formula for fire departments.

Mr. Ainsworth noted that there has been some restructuring at the ambulance service which has resulted in two ambulances on this side of the river on the weekend.

Sales Tax Revenue

Chairman Baggett noted the importance of the municipalities and county working together to develop a formula for the allocation of sales tax revenues. The agreement worked out for this year, which gives the County an additional \$2.1 million, also directs that a formula be agreed upon by October 31, 2003. James Martin, County Manager, reviewed loss of revenue as a result of Fayetteville annexations for Falcon, Godwin and Wade since 1994:

Falcon – cumulative since 1994 - \$25, 292

Godwin – cumulative since 1994 - \$5,085

Wade – cumulative since 1994 - \$31,261

Mr. Martin noted that as annexations take place, any non-annexing municipality loses sales tax revenues.

Sheriff's Office

Mayor Aekins inquired about a satellite sheriff's office for Falcon, Godwin, Wade area. Commissioner Melvin, liaison to the Sheriff's Office, said he would inquire and get back to the Mayor. Juanita Pilgrim, Deputy County Manager, noted that at one point the County and the Town of Wade were looking at a new fire station which would also provide space for the Sheriff's Office, and some human services departments. However, no money was available to do this.

Solid Waste Management

Mayor Aekins inquired about the possibility of having a container at the container site large enough for furniture. Charles Whittenton, Director of Solid Waste Management for the County, noted the difficulty in lifting heavy furniture into a container and that a container would only be able to hold a couple of pieces of large furniture.

Water and Sewer

Mayor Aekins inquired about the possibility of water for residents on Rich Walker Road. It was noted the lines stop at the Highway 13 interchange.

Chairman Baggett noted the County has established a new department, a Utilities Department, and that Mr. Tom Cooney, Director, would look at the area to see if some areas can be combined for these services. Running water to 15 homes is cost prohibitive.

The respective meetings were adjourned.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 7:30PM.

Marsha Fogle, Clerk to the Board

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7:30PM
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The purpose of this special meeting is to allow the residents in the Falcon, Godwin and Wade areas to discuss any concerns they may have with the Board of Commissioners.

Speakers

1. Terry Revels – Mr. Revels inquired if there is anything the Board of Commissioners can do to retard annexation.

Chairman Baggett noted that density invites annexation. He also noted there is very little the Board of Commissioners can do to prevent annexation.

2. Myers Braxton – Mr. Braxton inquired if there is a “master plan” for the area. He noted the importance of orderly growth to maintain and preserve the rural area.

Nancy Roy, Planning and Inspections Director for the County, noted the Joint Planning Board will discuss the Wade Area Plan at its meeting tomorrow night. She said there is an opportunity for the Planning Department and the Utilities Department to work closely on utility extensions to compliment the land use.

3. Ms. Baker – Ms. Baker noted she has formed committee to raise awareness of an environmentally clean Black River.
4. Russell McLaurin – Mr. McLaurin thanked the Board for adopting buffer requirements between recreation centers and residential areas. He also thanked the Board for its COLA for county employees. He said he hoped the Board would refrain from saying there is no tax increase for fiscal year 2004, as most taxes have gone up.
5. Elizabeth King – Inquired about public utilities for Rich Walker Road. She was directed to speak with Tom Cooney, Director of the County’s Utility Department.
6. Joe Dixon – Commissioner Dixon, Town of Wade, inquired about traffic lights at the new interchange. Nancy Roy noted there may be some discretionary monies available, as there were for the widening of River Road.
7. Unidentified citizen (lady) inquired why she could not get the Tax Office to address her property on the correct road. Nancy Roy will follow up.
8. Mary Emily Royal (Member, Board of Education): Inquired if there is a way to stop more group homes from coming into our county. It was noted the county has passed an ordinance requiring at least ½ mile between group homes. However, there is really nothing else that can be done. Ms. Royal expressed concern that even though the Legislature

passed a bill that says if out of county children are housed in Cumberland County funding will have to come with them, that is not happening at this time.

9. An unidentified speaker expressed concern about the cost of the new detention center, particularly the cost of the different color of brick on the outside of the center. Mr. Tom Cooney, County Engineer and project manager in charge of the construction, noted there was no difference in price of the brick.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 8:20PM.