

CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FEBRUARY 23, 2007, 1:00 PM
SPECIAL MEETING – CUMBERLAND COUNTY LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION
ROOM 119

PRESENT: Chairman Kenneth S. Edge
Vice Chairman Breeden Blackwell
Commissioner Jeannette Council
Commissioner John T. Henley, Jr.
Commissioner Diane Wheatley
Senator Tony Rand
Representative Rick Glazier
Representative William Brisson
James Martin, County Manager
Juanita Pilgrim, Deputy County Manager
Cliff Spiller, Assistant County Manager
Amy Cannon, Asst. County Manager – Finance
Grainger Barrett, County Attorney
Sara VanderClute, Public Information Officer
Marie Colgan, Deputy Clerk
Marsha Fogle, Clerk

Chairman Edge welcomed members of the Cumberland County Legislative Delegation, stating that the joint meeting was called to discuss important issues that are common to the County and the State and to share information.

Commissioner Diane Wheatley gave the invocation.

Chairman Edge followed the agenda, calling on various Commissioners to lead the discussion.

1. Medicaid Funding:

Commissioner Blackwell thanked the Legislators for making Medicaid a front burner issue and referred them to the latest proposal from the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) –

Cap county share of Medicaid

Target additional Medicaid relief to counties hardest hit by Medicaid burden

Authorize local option land transfer tax

Chairman Edge added that this proposal is the number one goal for the NCACC at this time. Representative Brisson provided the following information on the 2006-07 County Medicaid:

Bladen County - \$3,352,297 – per capita is \$101.80, property tax needed to pay Medicaid is 20 cents and it is 23% of the total budget.

Cumberland County - \$14,879,591 – per capita is \$47.87, property tax needed to pay Medicaid is 10 cents and it is 12% of the total budget.

Commissioner Blackwell advised that fifty counties spend more on Medicaid than on schools. Senator Rand cited the escalating cost from \$40,000,000 last year to \$90,000,000 this year, stating it will be more next year. Representative Glazier advised that the tax calculator project that NC State has come up with to look at what the 1% land transfer tax would do for the different counties would take a huge amount of political capital without a substantial benefit to many of the counties.

2. School Construction:

Chairman Edge advised attendees that this item is the number two goal for the School Board Association this year and the Department of Public Instruction has determined that **\$10,000,000,000** is what is needed. Cumberland County is looking at \$203,000,000 in school capital needs school. Chairman Edge thanked Senator Rand for the monies that the County is receiving through the lottery and added that \$55,000,000 is being approved for COPS, but that the Board has stretched these dollars as far as possible. Reduction of class size is good, but that has created more demand for school facilities in Cumberland County increasing our capacity by about 8,000 students even though the number of pupils has not grown very much. Chairman Edge asked Legislators to look at a statewide bond. Commissioner Wheatley added that the addition of the BRAC force at Ft. Bragg will also have an effect on Cumberland's school system and that efforts to maintain the school buildings Cumberland currently has is stretched to the limit. Representative Glazier stated he supports the school construction bond and Senator Rand agreed that school construction is one of the major needs in the State and that contact should be made with the Congressional Delegation to convey that the Federal government needs to participate in a more meaningful way.

3. Revenue Options:

Chairman Edge advised that the Commissioners' Association is asking that all 100 counties have the same opportunity/choice regarding revenue options which can only happen through General Assembly approval. Senator Rand agreed that counties should have maximum flexibility as one size does not fit all.

4. Mental Health Reform:

Commissioner Wheatley informed attendees of several concerns regarding Mental Health Reform: increase in psychiatric emergency services, increase in out of home placements for children, decrease in child psychiatrists, large waiting list for psychiatric services, and problems with Medicaid funded payments through Value Options. The result of the increase in need and the decrease in services has had an adverse affect on the hospitals and jails throughout the State. More oversight and more accountability are needed. Commissioner Wheatley emphasized that Cumberland County Mental Health received only \$12,000 out of \$90,000,000 that was allocated last year. Representative Glazier advised that a meeting was held with Secretary Carmen Hooker-Odom and her staff regarding these concerns and are working with her office regarding them. As a result of that meeting, a bill was immediately filed on the Senate side and on the House side which will require a study of the Department of Health and Human Services on all of their formulas and allocations to counties, which will include Mental Health. Legislators are also working with the Secretary's office on some initiatives to answer some of the local problems. The Mental Health Commission has been charged by the House to not only work on the resource issues, but also the management issues. Representative Brisson advised that he has been assigned to this Commission and that one of its first goals is to sit down with the local hospitals and sheriff departments to discuss their needs in regards to these problems. Commissioner Council added that Mental Health Reform is also adversely affecting the judicial system. Commissioner Blackwell noted that the local hospital and mental health agency are having positive dialog regarding problems created by the Mental Health Reform.

5. BRAC – Certificate of Need:

Commissioner Henley referred attendees to the handout provided advising that the current construction of over 100 beds at Cape Fear Valley Health System would be already inadequate to meet BRAC needs. Recently the time it took to get a hospital bed from the time it was requested went from 56 minutes to 8 hours within just a matter of days. Although the number of troops will increase with the influx of BRAC personnel, they are not enlarging the physician composition. A hospital administration meeting with the CON section is being held next week to see what the next State Health Plan can do to address these special needs. Commissioner Henley advised that they are being presented with this information as their help may be requested to get authorization for additional beds now so that they can be added during the current constructions which will save monies in the long run. Chairman Edge added that discussions have been ongoing regarding the total infrastructure problems to the area due to the influx of BRAC personnel.

6. Clarification that Cumberland County may require a payment in lieu of rather than actual dedication of recreation areas in its subdivision ordinance:

County Attorney Grainger Barrett referred attendees to the handout provided advising that this is a suggestion for the Commissioners to authorize Cumberland County to require payment in lieu of, rather than actual dedication, of recreation areas in its subdivision ordinance. Attorney Barrett explained the handout and advised that many other jurisdictions use this technique.

7. Clarification that Cumberland County may charge fees to operate and enforce a stormwater control or management ordinance:

County Attorney Barrett referred attendees to the next handout advising that a request is being made to put a cross reference in the public enterprise section of the county government statute to clarify that Cumberland County may charge fees to operate and enforce a stormwater control or management ordinance. The State has somewhat indicated that our County can get out of Phase I regulations, which would mean that we would no longer be in a joint stormwater utility with the City of Fayetteville. The County would still be under Phase II, but this document would allow the County to continue to charge a fee as it still has many stormwater issues. Attorney Barrett will submit a resolution to Senator Rand's office regarding this document.

8. Other Matters:

Chairman Edge reiterated that the reason for this meeting is to share information and to discuss how they can work together on the same issues. Chairman Edge thanked the delegation for all their work and offered the Commissioners' assistance to the Legislators. Senator Rand thanked the Commissioners for their hard work and the way they have worked together with the local school board. He knows that BRAC will present huge challenges but feels that the County will change for the best. Commissioner Blackwell added that a model has been developed for the State which shows how to work together and appreciates the way the Commissioners and Legislators work together. Representative Glazier thanked and commended staff also and Representative Brisson added that he thinks it is a good idea to meet more often with the County Commissioners.

9. Set next meeting date and time:

Chairman Edge will have the Clerk contact the Legislative chair's office to determine when the next meeting will be held. At this time, the Legislative Delegation departed.

8. Other Matters (continued):

A consensus was obtained by the members present approving Items 6 and 7 above and authorizing County Attorney Barrett to submit a resolution supporting those two local act requests to the legislative delegation.

In another matter, County Manager James Martin advised that the BRAC Regional Task Force has requested the seven tier-one counties (contiguous to Ft. Bragg and Pope Air Force Base) to submit a Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) grant application. There is \$65,000,000 available at the federal level and the Governor can submit two proposals for a \$5,000,000 grant over a two year period. The grant will integrate Workforce Development, Workforce training, Economic Development and education in the 11-county regional area. The request from the BRAC Regional Board is for the seven tier-one counties to fund up to \$11,000 (probably now more like \$7,000 to \$11,000), but funds need to be committed by next week. Therefore, the request is for authorization to commit to pay up to \$11,000 by Wednesday of next week. By consensus, the members present agreed to accept the manager's recommendation on this request, which was to authorize the expenditure but at present to take the funds from the Strike Force appropriation to the Cumberland County Business Council.

MEETING ADJOURNED: 2:25 PM