

CUMBERLAND COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
THURSDAY, MAY 17, 2012 – 6:00 PM
SAVANNAH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH – 6675 TABOR CHURCH ROAD
SPECIAL MEETING
MINUTES

PRESENT:

Commissioner Jeannette Council
Commissioner Charles Evans
Commissioner Billy King
Commissioner Ed Melvin
James Martin, County Manager
Amy Cannon, Deputy County Manager
James Lawson, Assistant County Manager
Rick Moorefield, County Attorney
Sally Shutt, Communication and Strategic Initiatives Manager
Tom Lloyd, Cumberland County Planning Director
Kristine Wagner, Cumberland County Transportation Program Director,
Randy Hume, City of Fayetteville Transit Director
Jeff Thompson, Fayetteville Advisory Committee on Transit
Pastor Mark Rowden, Savannah Missionary Baptist Church
Candice White, Clerk to the Board
Press

ABSENT:

Commissioner Marshall Faircloth, Chairman
Commissioner Jimmy Keefe
Commissioner Kenneth Edge

Commissioner Evans called the meeting to order.

Pastor Mark Rowden, Savannah Missionary Baptist Church, provided the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Commissioner Evans thanked everyone for attending and stated the purpose of the special meeting was to listen to citizens in the area talk about the need for and the possibility of bringing transit forward to the community. Commissioner Evans stated this was an official meeting of the Board of Commissioners and introduced Commissioner Jeannette Council, Commissioner Billy King and Commissioner Ed Melvin. Commissioner Evans also recognized County Manager James Martin and his staff; Randy Hume, City of Fayetteville Transit Director; and Jeff Thompson, Fayetteville Advisory Committee on Transit Chairman.

Commissioner Evans called on Pastor Rowden who explained the request of the community is to initiate a pilot program for transportation for the six miles from Interstate 95 to the corner store at Tabor Church Road. Pastor Rowden stated the community has been told that the county has a contracted transportation program but it does not meet the full needs of the community.

Commissioner Evans opened the comment period:

Laverne Whitehead - Whitehead stated she lives on Tabor Church Road and sees people every weekday morning looking for a ride to Fayetteville. Ms. Edwards stated she sometimes offers people a ride because she is fortunate enough to have a car.

Laurie Edwards – Ms. Edwards stated sometimes she has to go into work three to four hours before her shift starts just so she can get to work on time, and it is the same thing going back home after work. Ms. Edward stated this is an inconvenience because she has to get up early in order to catch who ever is going down the road.

Vernon Fisher – Mr. Fisher stated he grew up in the community and can recall paying twenty-five cents to ride a Greyhound bus coming from Elizabethtown to Fayetteville.

Commissioner Evans asked Mr. Martin to explain the transportation service provided by the county. Mr. Martin called on Kristine Wagner, Cumberland County Transportation Program Director, who briefed attendees on the county's demand response service for the rural portions of the county that provides transportation for medical, shopping, school and employment at \$2.25 per one-way trip, Monday through Friday, from 5:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Commissioner Evans asked attendees whether the service as described met their needs, and called the next speaker.

George Jones – Mr. Jones stated there are young folks in the community, such as painters and carpenters, who need someone to carry them to work. Mr. Jones stated there are also people in the community who have been laid off that could use bus service to look for other jobs. Mr. Jones stated if people could get from the corner store to Fayetteville, then they could switch to wherever they are going.

Ms. Wagner explained the county's demand response service is curb-to-curb and at the cost of \$2.25, people can get to work without a transfer.

At the request of Commissioner Evans, Randy Hume, City of Fayetteville Transit Director, explained the FAST schedule near the Cedar Creek community. Mr. Hume responded to additional questions and stated the FAST cost per hour is somewhere around \$60.00. Mr. Hume stated it is certainly convenient not to have to make a transfer and one solution would be to have another vehicle that either feeds the city's operation or feeds the transfer center on Old Wilmington Road. Mr. Hume stated the city would develop as many partnerships as it could to reduce costs to everybody.

Linda McNair – Ms. McNair asked what type of service could be offered to a person who gets off work at 2:00 pm or 3:00 pm in the afternoon and whether a van could be used if a FAST bus could not come to the corner store.

Commissioner Evans called on Mr. Hume for a response. Mr. Hume stated a van may be more cost effective than running a full time big bus, but one would also need to look at different

options, determine what works best, and cost it out. Mr. Hume stated it is about size and fuel economy, and the city's budget drives its transportation services which is also a consideration for the county.

In response to a question from Pastor Rowden, Mr. Hume stated were FAST to run a bus every hour throughout the day, then the city would also have to provide para-transit service or a van for disabled people which is the same service the county currently provides. Mr. Hume stated peak or express service would not require para-transit service. Mr. Hume stated para-transit service affects cost and there might be an opportunity for a partnership with the county's demand response service if it provides para-transit service.

In response to another question posed by Pastor Rowden, Ms. Wagner stated a person under the age of eighteen can not utilize the county's demand response service without an adult rider. Pastor Rowden expressed concern for individuals under the age of eighteen who have jobs or want to go to the mall but are not eligible for the county's transportation services.

Ms. Wagner responded to additional questions posed by Commissioner Evans regarding the county's demand response services. Mr. Thompson asked whether a city bus could go the extra six miles to the corner store Monday through Friday, and what the associated cost would be. Mr. Hume stated it could be done within the existing rules and the cost would be based on the extra miles, but there could be scheduling inconveniences for customers on the existing route.

Commissioner King asked Mr. Hume what it would take to get it to work. Mr. Hume responded it is primarily a budget issue. Mr. Thompson asked Mr. Hume whether he could make the decision administratively. Mr. Hume responded he could not commit the city because budgets, partnerships, agreements and politics would have to be considered.

Pastor Rowden stated if the city agrees to provide the service and the county is willing to pay the cost for the service, can attendees leave the meeting knowing this will be supported. Commissioner Evans stated the Board will continue to discuss the matter.

Melissa Fisher – Ms. Fisher questioned whether the county's service was under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and whether a van could be used as a connector to larger buses.

Ms. Wagner responded the county's service was not under the ADA. Mr. Hume stated for service throughout the day, a feeder is probably a better solution.

Sylvia McNeill – Ms. McNeill stated she has health issues and if a bus route were to come through the community, could it come earlier and would the hours be flexible. Ms. McNeill stated a bus system would help the area and asked why the county can't provide the same service as the city.

Commissioner Council spoke to different services provided by municipalities and counties, and stated the county is not in the transportation business with the exception of the demand response service. Commissioner Council stated on the other hand, municipalities are not equipped to provide door-to-door service. Commissioner Council stated counties mainly provide health, education, and social services and any services provided by the county are different from

municipal services. Commissioner Council stated the county has got to find a way to make people aware of the services the county has to offer. Commissioner Council stated she liked the idea of a pilot program although someone will need to pay for it and all budgets are tight.

Joan Williams – Ms. Williams stated she lives in Fayetteville and attends church in Cedar Creek. Ms. Williams asked if para-transit service would be offered with FAST after the pilot program and how would the door-to-door service be incorporated.

Commissioner Council stated a pilot project would probably not include anything other than basic service to the store then to the city. Commissioner Council stated there will still be challenges with a lot of individual cases that may not be able to be served.

Tom Lloyd, Cumberland County Planning Director, stated one option could be to discuss a feeder from the county to FAST service and there could also be other options to explore.

Douglas Ford – Mr. Ford questioned whether service could be provided seven days a week because it would help hotel/motel workers.

Commissioner King stated he felt better about this project than he has in a long time and there is a potential for good things to come out of the discussion. Commissioner Evans thanked everyone for attending and thanked Pastor Rowden for hosting the meeting. Commissioner Evans stated the Board will probably move forward with discussing a pilot program. Commissioner King asked what the direction should be to staff. Commissioner Evans called for a motion.

MOTION: Commissioner King moved to ask staff to meet with city staff and discuss the issue.

SECOND: Commissioner Evans

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: Commissioner Council moved to asked Mr. Lloyd and Ms. Wagner to talk with Mr. Hume.

Commissioner King stated he would support the substitute motion and withdrew his motion. Commissioner Evans stated he did not support the substitute motion because the Board came to the meeting to discuss bringing transit to this community and he would like to see the pilot program come to fruition. Commissioner King stated the end result should be to get people from the corner store to Fayetteville.

Rick Moorefield, County Attorney, suggested that the consensus of the Board could be to have the appropriate staff meet with city staff and make a pilot program proposal. Consensus of the Board favored the suggestion made by Mr. Moorefield.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Approved with/without revision:

Respectfully submitted,

Candice H. White
Clerk to the Board