

PERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEMBERS PRESENT

APRIL 29, 2013
OTHERS PRESENT

Jimmy B. Clayton
Kyle W. Puryear
B. Ray Jeffers
Frances P. Blalock
David Newell, Sr.

Heidi York, County Manager

Brenda B. Reaves, Clerk to the Board

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Person, North Carolina, met in regular session on Monday, April 29, 2013 at 6:30 pm at the Bushy Fork Grange Hall located at 7854 Burlington Road Hurdle Mills for the purpose of holding an informal "Community Conversations" meeting to receive feedback from the community about services, suggestions for improving County Government, and the opportunity to shed some light on the budget process in general.

Chairman Clayton called the meeting to order, led invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance. Vice Chairman Jeffers was absent until 7:35 pm.

DISCUSSION/ADJUSTMENT/APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Newell, and **carried 4-0** to approve the agenda.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS MEETING:

Attendees were given the opportunity to sign up with the Clerk to the Board to address the Board or the option to write down questions or comments to be read.

A total of 45 people were in attendance which included Board members, county staff and citizens.

County Manager, Heidi York told the group the Community Conversations meetings were developed to show more transparency in county government as well as give the public a chance to speak to the commissioners about community priorities prior to the proposed budget. Ms. York highlighted the *Person County Government Citizens' Guide to the Budget* presented to all attendees upon arrival. The handout included basic budget information including an overview of the budget process, county accomplishments, neighboring counties' tax rates, revenue neutral tax rate, the county's support of education, an update on economic development, the Capital Improvement Plan FY2014-2018 as well as explained where revenue is gained and to which county services or function areas it is spent.

Clerk to the Board, Brenda Reaves, called the names of those individuals who had signed up to speak in the following order:

Mr. Barry Matherly of 891 Hawkins Loop Road, Roxboro and the current Bushy Fork Booster Club President expressed a desire for a gym that could be used for sports other than basketball, such as volleyball and tennis as the County is planning to spend money on the roof of the current Bushy Fork gym. Ms. York noted county staffs are looking at the idea of constructing a new gym in lieu of the replacing the current roof from shingle to metal and if the idea has merit and is feasible to stay within the same \$134,000 budget. Mr. Matherly stated the lighting on the main field at the Bushy Fork park is too dim and thereby causing a safety issue. Commissioner Puryear asked Mr. Matherly about the relationship the Booster Club experiences with the county recreation department. Mr. Matherly stated their relationship with John Hill, Director at the Recreation, Arts and Parks Department is outstanding.

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Mr. Chris Chandler of 5754 Burlington Road, Roxboro addressed his concerns to the Board related to improvements needed at the Kirby Auditorium based upon his experiences assisting backstage with his sister's dance company's annual recital for numerous years. Mr. Chandler commented there have been glitches with the sound equipment, air conditioning, and space issues due to storage of props. Mr. Chandler questioned the funds from rentals not being used for upgrades at the Kirby. Mr. Hill agreed the Kirby facility could use many upgrades noting the department was always looking into maintenance issues with a priority given to safety. Mr. Hill explained the rental funds were deposited in the general fund. Mr. Hill added that staffs are exploring reconfiguring space and if relocating and cleaning out props would be agreeable with the Arts Council and Piedmont Community College (PCC). General Services Director, Ray Foushee confirmed two new air conditioning units were installed last year. Mr. Chandler suggested a community fundraiser to raise funds for specific upgrades and noted an equipment lease may be an option to keep equipment current. Ms. York stated she would pass along his comments to Erin Ganey, the Arts Council and PCC noting a new roof is slated to be installed next fiscal year in the amount of \$342,273.

Mr. Jay Jennings of 155 High Rock Road, Hurdle Mills spoke on the following two topics: Farm Tour and Water Quality. Mr. Jennings stated three Person County farms were recently featured in the Piedmont Farm Tour. Ms. York noted Person County had its first annual Farm Tour last fall and was sponsored by the Person County Museum of History and the Cooperative Extension Program. Mr. Jennings stated a new nutrient control criteria development plan through which the state would begin looking at other nutrients beyond nitrogen and phosphorous and other river basins (i.e., Tar River and Roanoke River) in addition to the criteria and regulations for the Falls Lake. Mr. Jennings stated public comments are being accepted until May 24, 2013 related to the proposed plan. Chairman Clayton stated he was aware noting there is legislation proposed as well. Mr. Jennings advocated for legislation to delay implementation of any rules until monitoring data can prove the water quality is altered or not. Commissioner Puryear asked the County Manager, Heidi York to research if Person County can request an injunction and outline the process for such at the Board's next meeting. Commissioner Puryear asked Mr. Jennings his opinion related to the county's paying the stormwater fees from the county fund balance as done in the current budget year or if the fees should be imposed upon the citizens. Mr. Jennings responded that he would be in favor of a fee being assessed upon citizens so that they would be educated and aware of the stormwater rules to which they have to comply.

Mr. Clyde Whitfield of 6738 Burlington Road, Hurdle Mills spoke on the following two topics: Taxes and Horses. Mr. Whitfield expressed dissatisfaction with the recent property revaluation and highlighted a recent *Courier-Times* online poll revealing 85% of the respondents were as well noting the household net worth had decreased from \$126,000 in 2007 to \$77,000 in 2010. Mr. Whitfield stated the property values were too high and the property owners needed relief reiterating 2012 realtor data that 70-75% of 550 houses sold for less than the 2012 tax value. Commissioner Puryear agreed with Mr. Whitfield noting he wanted the revaluation reconsidered however the Board voted 3-2 to forward all revaluation appeals to the Board of Equalization and Review. Commissioner Puryear noted the revaluation resulted in \$800,000-\$900,000 in additional revenue for the county and was essentially a tax increase for the residents. Commissioner Puryear stated support of a revenue neutral tax rate for the upcoming budget. Tax Administrator, Russell Jones stated that the revenue neutral rate would equal less than a penny decrease at this point noting some properties in the county had their values decreased as a result of the revaluation. Mr. Whitfield advocated for local law related to the care of horses and the size of pasture required for a horse noting there are two residents in his community keeping a horse on a quarter of an acre that has no grass nor a proper place for the horse to roam and run. Commissioner Blalock asked the Animal Services Director, Ron Shaw if there were any rules in

place. Mr. Shaw stated there were not any rules currently in place noting his agreement with Mr. Whitfield that horses needed an adequate space to run. Ms. York told the group the Board will have on its May 6, 2013 agenda for consideration a revised Animal Services Ordinance to which the Board could further discuss inclusion of horse related law.

Ms. Kelly Foti of 24 Coney Pine Avenue, Roxboro requested Board input relative the proposed Senior Center Strategic Plan covering the next four years. The Person County Senior Center consists of six employees, over one hundred volunteers and operates with a budget of over \$500,000. The Person County Senior Center provides Home and Community Care Block Grant services through the Older Americans Act in conjunction with support from the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services, Kerr-Tar Regional Area on Aging and Person County. Ms. Foti noted the Person County Community Health Survey shows the population age 70-74 is expected to grow by 71% by 2030 and the age group 74-84 to grow by 55%. To serve a growing older adult population, the Strategic Plan addresses the need for increased facility space, increased preventative services, expanded low cost services and expanded programs. Commissioner Newell asked Ms. Foti about the transportation services. Ms. Foti stated the Older Americans Act (federal guidelines) mandates access for transportation to older adults and provides limited funding for such. Commissioner Blalock requested a copy of the Older Americans Act.

Ms. York thanked everyone for attending the Community Conversations meeting and encouraged use of the anonymous suggestion box online. Ms. York noted the recommended budget would be presented to the Board on May 20, 2013 and the budget public hearing is scheduled for June 3, 2013 at 7:00 in the County Auditorium.

Commissioner Newell encouraged the public to voice their opinion prior to the adopted budget as the commissioners are now making priorities.

Commissioner Puryear suggested the attendees to stay for the business part of the meeting related to the Capital Improvement Plan.

Mr. Matherly asked the Tax Administrator a case specific question related to the process of the revaluation. Mr. Jones reviewed the appeal process which is currently with the Board of Equalization and Review. Mr. Jones recommended Mr. Matherly and any other citizens to call the revaluation hotline at 322-6111 to ask questions and to schedule an appointment by noon on May 31, 2013 with the Board of Equalization and Review. Mr. Jones confirmed citizens must appeal with the Board of Equalization and Review to be eligible to appeal to the state level. Mr. Jones added that following the appeal level a letter will be mailed to the citizen with the appeal outcome and the next step process in the appeal. Commissioner Newell stated taxpayers may walk into a Board of Equalization and Review meeting and for an appeal by the noted deadline.

ADOPTION OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN FOR FY 2014-2018

County Manager, Heidi York reminded the Board the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for FY2014-2018 was presented to the Board at its April 1, 2013 meeting noting the budget appropriations for funding would only apply to the projects planned in the FY2014 with the remaining years serving for planning purposes only. Ms. York added any projects projected to be included in a financing would again come before the Board for approval.

Vice Chairman Jeffers requested the Finance Director, Amy Wehrenberg to provide an overview of the debt services.

Ms. Wehrenberg stated Person County debt service ratio is at 7% comparable to 10% of the population group and 12% statewide. Ms. Wehrenberg noted Person County will have a substantial amount of debt dropping off in FY2016 and coupled with the availability of low interest rates, the opportunity presents itself for Person County to take on additional debt.

Commissioner Puryear stated opposition to the recommended CIP and did not agree with taking on additional debt.

A **motion** was made by Vice Chairman Jeffers, and **carried 3-2** to approve the Capital Improvement Plan FY2014-2018 as presented. Chairman Clayton, Vice Chairman Jeffers and Commissioner Blalock voted in favor of the motion. Commissioners Puryear and Newell voted in opposition to the motion.

RECESS:

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Puryear, and **carried** to recess the meeting at 8:12 pm until May 6, 2013 at 6:00 pm for the purpose of closed session discussion jointly with the City of Roxboro of matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the county per General Statutes 143-318.11(a)(4).

Brenda B. Reaves
Clerk to the Board

Jimmy B. Clayton
Chairman

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