

February 15, 1999

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA**

Monday, February 15, 1999

9:00 A.M. – 3:00 P.M.

Commissioners' Retreat

MINUTES

Place: N. C. Museum of Life and Science, 433 Murray Avenue, Durham, NC

Present: Chairman MaryAnn E. Black, Vice-Chairman Ellen W. Reckhow, and Commissioners William V. Bell, Joe W. Bowser, and Becky M. Heron

Absent: None

Presider: Chairman Black

County Manager David F. Thompson opened the Commissioners' Retreat by presenting a summary of the Department Heads' Retreat that was held on Wednesday of last week. The retreat was an impressive day to see the staff discuss the mission and philosophy that the Board adopted at its retreat. The goals and objectives of the Commissioners were also discussed. There were no negative comments made about any of the goals and objectives that the Board adopted. The message I took to the staff was that we had to look at the goals and objectives as they related to the framework from which they were created. The framework that the Board of County Commissioners developed was an extremely positive one. The implications the Board had stated during the retreat for us was that you wanted the Commissioners, County Manager, and Department Heads to work together to establish and enhance partnerships and collaborative efforts, to reach out more proactively, to build relationships across boundaries, to identify ways to work more effectively across boundaries, to find our voice in Durham County Government to have a stronger voice with North Carolina legislators and our joining counties, and to identify with the other entities to work with them. Those are some of the things that came out of the framework created. When you look at some of the types of implications and you apply it to the goals, the goals change; they become very much a part of building a stronger proactive organization. The Department Heads felt positive about the goals and objectives within that framework. The Department Heads were excited about what the Commissioners did. The other theme we saw, as your staff, was that the Board was talking externally and was talking about the future. The Board feels we did a good job in taking the goals and objectives and making progress on them. The Board saw that if they led us that we not only follow but we will excel in trying to accomplish what the Board outlined. What we have seen with the new goals and objectives is the positive outreach for the community we serve and more importantly, we are trying to build partnerships. We discussed working up action plans to respond to the Commissioners' goals and objectives. A majority of the discussion dealt with how positive the goals and objectives were and how we can start forming partnerships with each other.

County Manager Thompson commented that Smart Growth is the first item to be discussed today. The agenda shows the format that we will have today. We are trying to address all these questions for each one of the goals. We want to know what the impact will be by working together. The staff is feeling one with the County Commissioners. We talked about having a pledge, but we did not know how to draft a pledge that would encompass our range of support for the Board's initiatives. The staff has a lot of respect for the Board of County Commissioners. We respect our community and how our community feels about county government. We have respect for our own departments and for our own employees. The goals are proactive and positive. Our pledge would be to support the Commissioners and citizens. That is a strong statement from staff. We did

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not come up with a pledge, but if the Department Heads agree with what has been said, please stand and show the Board our support.

Chairman Black thanked all the employees for standing and showing your support for the County Commissioners and the Durham County citizens. Over the last two years, the Department Heads and your staff have done a wonderful job of letting Durham County citizens know you work hard and work hard for them. She spoke about the awards the County has received over the last year and a half. Some of us have a distance to go but we have made that distance in terms of saying we roll up our sleeves and do the unfunded mandates that come to us anyway. The Commissioners have also asked the Department Heads to do additional work, which you have taken on. Chairman Black thanked the Department Heads for all the work you do for us and for your support. We are in a partnership and if one part of the partnership is unbalanced, you don't work well.

Commissioners Reckhow, Heron, and Bowser thanked the Department Heads for the support they have shown the County Commissioners during the years.

Commissioner Bowser said the County has excellent Department Heads and staff. They should not be threatened by the merger discussion. The employees will stay with Durham County.

Mr. Thompson said the Commissioners will not have a budget retreat but the financial overview of the County and what the main issues are will be discussed in a worksession with the Commissioners. Financially, the County is in good shape. The bigger issues for us are the goals and objectives and understanding as Department Heads how you see us moving forward with those goals and objectives and giving feedback. That is more important at this point is time than the numbers in the budget.

Ellen Solomon, meeting facilitator, Strategic Change Inc., reviewed the agenda format for the Commissioners and staff.

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- 15 min. Objective: To provide intro, purpose of session, set the tone
- 1 hr. Objective: To provide *input* and clarity and *alignment* about the **mission – vision – values – philosophy statement**
- Cheryl Lloyd – Present summary of “Community Conversations” data
 - Anita Daniels – Present the **values** that Department Heads established
 - Small group discussion
 - Large group – highlights of values discussion; revisions; agree to 5–6 – demonstration of commitment
- Break–
- 1 hr. Objective: To get *clarity* about the **strategic goals and major actions** to be taken over the next two years to achieve them.
- (1) **“Smart Growth” – David Powell and functional team**
- Goal group – **Present** action plans and linkages for each goal. Include:
 - Questions or concerns
 - What has to change *internally*, e.g., systems, policies, practices
 - Procedures, culture
 - What staff will do to contribute to goal achievement
 - What staff needs from Board
 - Large group discussion: Add/delete or revise goals, if necessary.
 - What does Board expect from staff
 - What can Board provide to staff in support of achievements
- Lunch–
- 2 hrs. Continue as above for remaining strategic goals:
(2) **“HHS Merger”** – Steven Ashby and functional team
- Break–
- (3) **“City-County Merger”** – Michael Palmer and functional team
(4) **“Transportation, Education, and Taxes”** – David Thompson
- 15 min. Objective: To **develop the message** to staff about the direction and focus (goals) for the next two years
- 15 min. Objective: To specify **“next steps”** actions, publicity, communications to staff, and get closure

Ms. Cheryl Lloyd, Director, Cooperative Extension Service, made a presentation summarizing the data collected from the “Community Conversations” sessions that were held. Ms. Lloyd’s report centered on the following areas: purpose, community assets, resources, opportunities, and financial resources.

The Commissioners asked Ms. Lloyd several questions to which she responded. The Commissioners also made several comments about the Community Conversations.

Ms. Anita Daniels, Youth Services Coordinating Board Director, discussed the values that the Department Heads developed at their retreat. The County values are as follows: integrity, teamwork, customer focus, fairness, equity, excellence, and accountability.

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Ellen Solomon led the group in small group discussions that considered the following: what do you like, do you see yourself operating under the values, and do you see any needed changes or revisions as a result of the values discussion.

Each group had a representative to report on the group discussion and recommendations about values.

The Department Heads stood in support of the six values that were discussed in the group discussion.

David Powell made a presentation on the Smart Growth strategies for achieving the Commissioners' "Smart Growth" strategic goals. His main objective was to get clarity about the strategic goals and major actions to be taken over the next two years to achieve them.

The strategies are as follows:

- **Develop reliable data on the current number of households and jobs located in the center city and transit corridors.**
 - Provide benchmark and context.
 - Concentration of effort.
- **Recommend changes in zoning ordinances and building codes to *tilt* the scales in favor of development in targeted areas.**
 - Promote high standards and high quality.
 - Promote smart growth principles.
 - At same time, make easier.
- **Recommend changes in financial incentives to *tilt* the scales in favor of development in targeted areas.**
 - Industrial incentive policy doesn't work for downtown development.
 - Special incentive policy with different thresholds and motives.
- **Recommend certain development incentives to *tilt* the scales in favor of development in targeted areas.**
 - Eliminate or change impact fee structure.
 - Implement express review for site plans.
 - Focus more on administrative approval vs. BOCC approval.
- **Conduct workshops with architects and developers to explain development rules for targeted areas.**
- **Focus on parking facilities as a means of promoting growth.**
- **Focus on public facilities as a means of promoting growth.**
 - Location and quality.
 - Smart growth principles.
- **Work with Downtown Durham Inc., Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Durham to market advantages.**

The Commissioners and staff held a lengthy discussion about the strategies.

Health and Human Services

Dr. Steven Ashby, Area Mental Health Director, presented the strategic County goal for health and human services.

Dr. Ashby's summary follows:

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Department Heads Retreat Summary Feedback

Goal: To merge Social Services, Mental Health, and Public Health Agencies (functions and governance) under a Board of Directors, to improve the health, welfare, and health care delivery system of our citizens.

- Need to clarify goal intent and restate goal to reflect this clarification
 - focus on demonstrating improvements in the health and human services delivery system
 - county health and human services is more than DSS, Mental Health, Public Health
 - merger is a word that describes a potential goal implementation result; study is a word that helps define the purpose of a goal.
- Initial Thoughts: What we can do now to support this goal:
 - continue to support the County Manager’s integrated Work Plan process as a foundation for planning and implementing the 1999-00 budget
 - define and build internal and external linkages
 - begin to research together other models of “best practices”
 - establish County Health and Human Services Steering Committee: assist with study; build information sharing, collaboration, and a shared identity; serve as a collective focal point for new Deputy County Manager liaison and oversight, and in turn County Manager overall executive management of the County
- Our feedback is rooted in shared values that strongly support County Commissioner overall Vision, Mission, and Philosophy commitments: to work together to enhance the quality of care so that people can fairly and equitably reach their highest potentials and live in a healthy community.
- We are excited about the leadership, direction, and strong foundation being established by our County Commissioners. We are also highly motivated and determined to achieve goals that will make our local government and community the envy of North Carolina.

The Commissioners and staff discussed the merger of Social Services, Mental Health, and Public Health agencies at great length.

The Commissioners and staff concurred to complete a comprehensive study, including financial, governance organization, and merger, and support and barriers, that identifies and recommends best practices for delivery of health and human services to all citizens of Durham County that is the envy of North Carolina.

County Manager Thompson said the health and human service committee would develop a proposed timeline, scope of study, and resources we will need to do that. The committee’s report will be brought back to the Board of County Commissioners.

The County Commissioners concurred to direct the County Manager to deliver a plan to merge health and human services to the Board of County Commissioners in 45 days.

City and County Government Merger Study

Michael Palmer, Deputy County Manager, discussed the City-County merger study by using the following outline:

Structural Considerations:

- Distinct Services
- Multiple Approaches

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Administrative Issues

- Operations
- Facilities
- Services
- Organizational Structure

Human Resource Issues

- Change Management
- Pay and Benefits

Financial Issues

- Pro Forma Financial Reporting
- Tax Rate Impacts/Service Districts
- Credit Rating Impact Assessment

Mr. Palmer also discussed the Athens-Clarke County and Jacksonville-Dual County merger.

County Attorney Chuck Kitchen presented the Department Heads the most recent copy of the County's organizational chart.

The County Commissioners met in a group to work on a handout about City/County government merger that Vice-Chairman Reckhow prepared.

The County Commissioners reviewed the approach to City/County consolidation document dated February 15, 1999. This document is what the City Council was bringing forth and what the County Commissioners talked about.

The Commissioners revised the original document and agreed on the final draft. The draft document was sent to the City Council members.

The final draft follows:

APPROACH TO CITY/COUNTY CONSOLIDATION 2/15/99

Joint Committee: Form a joint City Council and County Commissioners Ad Hoc Advisory Committee by March 15, 1999 to clarify issues necessary for a merged government. The structure will be a body composed of any County Commissioner and any City Council member who chooses to serve.

Purpose: The committee will be charged with guiding a study to determine the feasibility/advisability (costs and benefits) of consolidating city and county governments in Durham County. The Committee's work will include:

- Develop a list of questions and issues to be resolved.
- Develop a communications strategy to obtain public input and keep the public informed. This strategy could include citizen forums, public hearings, focus groups, surveys, a special newsletter, and other outreach techniques.
- Recommend, for governing body approval, the composition of citizen task forces that will investigate the details of issue areas including: administration/general government; public works, community services and development, health and human services; public protection, taxation and finance; governmental structure. The committee's recommendation for composition of the task force should include broad community representation. Appropriate staff from city and county governments and specific outside resource expertise would be made available to the citizens committees.

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- As soon as possible, determine a budget for appropriate committee and task force support, report that to the governing bodies for approval, and select service providers (consultant and/or facilitator) within the budgeted amounts.
- Access additional resources, as appropriate, to assist the committee's efforts (i.e. the Institute of Government, League of Municipalities, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, assistance from local universities, and information from consolidated governments in other areas).
- Submit a report to the governing bodies by October 1, 1999, regarding the feasibility/advisability of merger. The report should include the task force reviews evaluating the costs and benefits of merger including efficiency, effectiveness, equity, accessibility, and accountability.
- Other activities deemed necessary to gather information and guide the process.

After receipt of the joint committee report regarding the feasibility/advisability of consolidation, the Durham City Council and the Durham County Board of Commissioners would determine whether to proceed to create a formal Consolidation Study Commission. If the Commission is formed, it will begin its work by December 15, 1999 with a report, including a proposed Charter, due by May 15, 2000. The Consolidation Study Commission would report on the form of governance and all other issues as called for in Article 20, Chapter 153A of the North Carolina General Statute regarding consolidated government. With this time frame, a referendum on merger would be possible in November 2000.

Daniel C. Hudgins, Social Services Director, spoke about the objective to develop the message to staff about the direction and focus (goals) for the next two years.

Ellen Solomon spoke briefly about the "next steps" actions, publicity, communications to staff, and to get closure.

County Manager David F. Thompson deferred comments about "Transportation, Education, and Taxes."

Chairman Black presented the staff an overview of what the Commissioners did in looking at an approach to the study of City/County consolidation. Her comments were taken from the "Approach to City/County Consolidation" document dated February 15, 1999 (recorded above).

The Commissioners had a discussion on City/County consolidation.

Chairman Black thanked the Department Heads for all the hard work they do for the citizens and the Commissioners.

No official action was taken at the Commissioners' retreat.

Respectfully submitted,

Garry E. Umstead, CMC
Clerk to the Board