

**DURHAM COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
SPECIAL BREAKFAST MEETING WITH
DURHAM COUNTY LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION**

Durham Public Library Auditorium
300 N. Roxboro Street

February 10, 2003

8:00 A.M.

MINUTES

Present: Chairman Ellen W. Reckhow, Vice-Chairman Joe W. Bowser, and Commissioners Philip R. Cousin Jr., Becky M. Heron, and Mary D. Jacobs

Absent: None

Delg. Present: Senator Wilbur Gulley, Senator Jeanne Lucas, Representative H. M. Michaux, Jr., Representative Paul Miller, Representative Paul Luebke, and Representative James W. Crawford Jr.

Staff Present: County Manager Michael M. Ruffin, Deputy County Manager Carolyn P. Titus, Deputy County Manager Wendell M. Davis, County Attorney Chuck Kitchen, Budget Director Pam Meyer, Finance Director George K. Quick, Public Information Officer Deborah Craig-Ray, Public Health Director Brian Letourneau, and Clerk to the Board Garry E. Umstead

Presider: Chairman Ellen W. Reckhow

Chairman Reckhow thanked everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules to be with the Commissioners and the Durham County staff.

The Chairman thanked the Durham County Legislative Delegation for the success of the last Legislative Delegation. The session was considered to be a productive one.

Chairman Reckhow asked everyone to introduce him/herself since there is a new member in the Durham Legislative Delegation. Representative James W. Crawford Jr. is the new member of the delegation.

Chairman Reckhow said that the agenda would be followed.

“Hold Harmless” Provision

The first item was a discussion of the “Hold Harmless” provision of the new ½-cent sales tax.

The Chairman called on County Manager Michael Ruffin to make introductory comments.

County Manager Ruffin asked Pam Meyer, Director, Budget and Management Services, to make a presentation on the NC State House half-cent proposal projections.

Representative Paul Luebke made comments from the Finance Committee perspective.

Chairman Reckhow said this is a big issue. She asked that the legislators do anything they could to help Durham County with this issue. Any additional information or numbers would be provided at their request. She asked them to keep Durham County government informed as to what is going on with this item.

County Manager Ruffin said this amounts to more than 1½ cents on the tax rate.

There was a lengthy discussion on this agenda item between the Commissioners and the Durham Legislative Delegation.

No official action was taken on this agenda item.

Discussion of Bioterrorism Funding

Public Health Director Brian Letourneau presented a summary of Bioterrorism funding issue.

The state health department received about \$23 million for bioterrorism preparedness from the federal government. Durham is a host county for a Hazardous Materials Rapid Response Team (RRT). Durham receives no more services than any other county in our region, although Durham is a host county for the (RRT).

Virtually all of our bioterrorism preparedness has been provided with existing resources.

The State Health Department has recently committed \$2 million for local grants and is conducting a competitive bidding process for the money. Durham has applied for \$96,090 to purchase needed materials for a mass vaccination clinic and for an FTE bioterrorism planning position. It is unlikely that Durham will be awarded this level of funding from the \$2 million as there are 85 local public health jurisdictions competing for the funds.

Mr. Letourneau said it would be fair to say that most local health departments want a significantly larger share of any future federal bioterrorism grant funds.

The Board of County Commissioners and the Durham Delegation discussed at length the funding issues for the bioterrorism efforts.

Representative Paul Luebke said that the funding issue for bioterrorism is a federal issue. He commented that the Commissioners should have a breakfast and meet with Congressman Price, Senator Edwards, and Senator Dole concerning bioterrorism funding.

Chairman Reckhow said the Commissioners plan to meet with the Congressional Delegation. One of the issues that the Commissioners want to bring to the attention of the Congressional Delegation is remote sales.

No official action was taken on this agenda item.

Presentation of Legislative Agenda

Chairman Reckhow asked Public Information Officer Deborah Craig-Ray to introduce legislative agenda items that were adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on January 27, 2003.

Ms. Craig-Ray began the presentation by talking about the following issues:

- Priority Items
- Seek Items
- Support Items (NCACC Legislative Goals approved on January 17, 2003)

County Attorney Chuck Kitchen assisted with explaining the legislative items to the members of the Durham Delegation.

There was a lengthy discussion about the Juvenile Code Revisions with the County Attorney, Commissioners, and the Delegation.

County Attorney Kitchen discussed the Impact Tax, since the Commissioners have requested the tax be approved for Durham County.

Representative Paul Miller suggested the Commissioners contact the local Home Builders Association and the Realtors concerning the support of the impact tax.

Chairman Reckhow said that Ms. Craig-Ray wanted to go over the priority issues of the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. The four priority issues are as follows:

- Local Government Finance
- Medicaid Relief
- Latino Issues Study Commission
- Long-Term Care System Improvements

Ms. Craig-Ray reviewed the four issues for the Durham Delegation. Questions were asked and comments were made. The staff responded to the questions and comments.

The Commissioners and the Durham Delegation held a lengthy discussion on the four priority items.

The next section of the legislative items dealt with the “seek” items in the legislative package.

Ms. Craig-Ray reviewed the nine items in the “seek” category of the legislative package.

Senator Lucas highlighted the creation of special districts to underground utility lines.

The Delegation discussed the “seek” legislative items in the package. Staff responded when it was necessary.

Representative James Crawford asked the County Commissioners how they felt about the Mental Health Reform plan. The County Commissioners discussed the plan with the legislators.

Commissioner Joe Bowser asked what the Commissioners could do to prevent the State of North Carolina from closing the North Carolina Department of Revenue office in Durham.

Chairman Reckhow asked when the deadline was for submission of local bills.

Representative Paul Miller said the deadline would be early March.

Chairman Reckhow requested that the legislators keep the information flowing to the County Commissioners so they could be kept informed of what is going on.

Chairman Reckhow suggested that the Commissioners and the Legislators have a follow-up meeting in the spring to see how the legislative session is going. The Delegation could give the Board a report from the General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted,

Garry E. Umstead, CMC
Clerk to the Board

GEU:SBP