



Chatham County, NC

Meeting Minutes

Board of Commissioners

Friday, February 28, 2020

8:30 AM

Agriculture and Conference Center

Legislative Breakfast

Legislative Breakfast - 8:30 AM - Agriculture and Conference Center

Present: 2 - Commissioner Mike Dasher and Chair Karen Howard

Absent: 3 - Vice Chair Diana Hales, Commissioner Jim Crawford and Commissioner Andy Wilkie

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Howard welcomed all the attendees: Representative Robert Reives, Senator Valerie Foushee, Chatham County Manager Dan LaMontagne, Deputy County Manager and Finance Officer Vicki McConnell, Assistant County Manager Bryan Thompson, Clerk to the Board Lindsay Ray, Deputy Clerk Kaitlyn Warren, County Attorney Jep Rose, County Public Information Officer Kara Lusk Dudley, Chatham County Planning Director Jason Sullivan, Chatham Economic Development Corporation President Alyssa Byrd, Council on Aging Director Dennis Streets, Chatham County Sheriff Mike Roberson, CCSO Attorney Rik Stevens, CCSO Major Tracy Kelly, Siler City Mayor John Grimes, Siler City Town Manager Roy Lynch, Pittsboro Attorney Paul Messick, Goldston Commissioner Steve Cunnup, Goldston Mayor Tim Cunnup, Chatham County Register of Deeds Lunday Riggsbee, Chatham County Schools Superintendent Dr. Derrick Jordan, Chatham County School Board Chair Gary Leonard, CCCC Provost Mark Hall, and CCCC President Lisa Chapman.

BOARD PRIORITIES

[20-3424](#)

Review issues with State Legislators

Attachments: [2020-21 Legislative Goals Final](#)

Mr. LaMontagne reviewed the School Buildings Bond Act legislative goal. Chair Howard asked Dr. Jordan if the school system's legislative goals are similar to this. Dr. Jordan stated the state associations make this a priority.

Mr. LaMontagne reviewed the legislative goal surrounding Broadband. Chair Howard said there is an app that allows people to log in and identify whether or not they have internet service. She will share it with the County Manager and then staff will share it out to attendees. Chair Howard said the app is called Test IT. Ms. Riggsbee said broadband is even more important now with coronavirus as people need to be able to work from home and stay home until they are better. Mr. Thompson said it is a critical utility and that is what is important. Rep. Reives said he and his colleagues argue that it is a utility. It is important for health and education and it is also an economic tool. He asked attendees to please keep talking to other elected officials. There are enough

votes in the General Assembly to repeal the Wilson Bill but the problem is the leadership. This is not a partisan issue. Medical care has become a big deal for tele-medicine. Sheriff Roberson said it is also a public safety issue for fire, EMS, and law enforcement.

Mr. Lynch reviewed the Economic Tiers legislative goal. There are now 20 counties that are Tier Three and six of those are in TJCOG region. This will be critical for the funding of the construction of the wastewater lines for the CAM site. Chair Howard asked who the white paper was submitted to. Mr. Thompson said TJCOG says it has been submitted to the General Assembly but it is not getting a lot of traction. Sen. Foushee said until we get enough pressure from legislators in affected areas, it is not going to change. Mayor Grimes asked how she would suggest they apply pressure. Sen. Foushee said they will have to make an appeal to legislators directly. Rep. Reives said the General Assembly leadership needs pressure from the legislators. Chair Howard suggested Mayor Grimes reach out to other counties also affected. Mayor Grimes asked if County staff can give the Town of Siler City a list of those counties. Mr. LaMontagne stated staff would get that to them. Mayor Grimes asked who the representatives are from Davie County. He will contact them. Mr. LaMontagne stated we can't eliminate the tier system but what we need to figure out is a good replacement. Sen. Foushee said there is some traction around census tract idea.

Mr. Thompson reviewed the Property Tax legislative goal.

Mr. LaMontagne reviewed local control of permitting and inspections. Chair Howard said the more the state imposes its view of how things should work, the less able we are to respond to the actual needs in the county. The professionals know planning and the planning department should be defining what the county does. Rep. Reives said when decisions are made at the state level for the local level, they just don't know the experience there. We are to the point now where we micromanage everything. The state should only step in if there is a real problem. Chair Howard said it never seems to be a benefit to the people but more for an organization. Sen. Foushee stated that there needs to be a coalition of those who have been local leaders to put pressure on legislators about local control. She is amazed that state leaders who have been in local government forget what it is like in a county or city. She suggests that the commissioners talk at their association meetings about how to reach those who are former local officials. Rep. Reives said a legislator can appreciate their leadership but they shouldn't be so loyal to the leadership's vision that they forget about the people they represent.

Mr. Thompson reviewed county sales tax assignment. Ms. Riggsbee said it is educating the people who are buying products just as much as it is about educating the vendors selling products. Ms. Byrd said she knows a home builder who corrects his sales tax on a weekly basis. The tax is based on the delivery location, not the point of sale. Chair Howard asked if it is possible to request to make the 9 digit zip codes mandatory.

Mr. Streets reviewed the Home & Community Care Block Grant legislative goal.

Mr. Streets reviewed the Senior Center general purpose funds legislative goal.

Mr. Streets reviewed the adult protective & guardianship services legislative goal. Major Kelly asked what population is growing faster. Mr. Streets said the elderly population. Major Kelly asked if the Council on Aging clients are living longer. Mr. Streets said they generally are living longer. Dr. Jordan said the number of live births continues to

fluctuate.

Mr. Streets reviewed funding for public transit.

Mr. LaMotagne reviewed solar energy tax credits.

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the goals surrounding the new 160D legislation regarding local planning and development. Chair Howard suggested finding other counties as allies. Sen. Foushee said to change the legislation would require legislation. If it is controversial it cannot be considered when they return for the short session. Rep. Reives said it probably won't be a lengthy short session. He encourages staff to start today to encourage other jurisdictions to join forces on this and get homebuilders on board.

Dr. Jordan reviewed the school system's legislative goals. Chair Howard said Sen. Foushee had to leave and is on her way to Virginia Cross Elementary but she is participating on speaker phone. Dr. Hall said it is unbelievable that the state school calendar was based on the economic benefit of a couple counties at the coast. Ms. Riggsbee said it isn't just the coast, it is also the mountains. Dr. Jordan said this is why local government should be able to have flexible calendars. Chair Howard said those counties say the current calendar was not a request of theirs. They would like a flexible calendar. The NC Association of County Commissioners has made this a priority goal. Mr. Leonard said having exams before winter break is a big positive as a teacher. Why do charter schools get calendar flexibility but the public schools don't. Dr. Hall said he also supports the retirement goal for all state employees. Rep. Reives said that is coming from the shrinking of the budget. He agrees taking the retirement benefits away from state employees is a bad idea.

Chair Howard thanked Rep. Reives and Sen. Foushee for always being available and for coming today today and listening to everyone's concerns.

ADJOURNMENT