

February 26, 2011—Planning Retreat

The Randolph County Board of Commissioners met in special session at 8:30 a.m. at the Randolph Community College Foundation Conference Center for a Planning Retreat. Commissioners Holmes, Frye, Kemp, Lanier and Haywood were present, as well as County Manager Richard Wells; Finance Officer Will Massie; County Attorney Ben Morgan; Assistant County Attorney Aimee Scotton; Stacy Griffin, County Human Resources Director; James Chriscoe, Maintenance Director; Cheryl Ivey, Clerk to the Board and Amanda Varner, Deputy Clerk to the Board. Other County Department Heads were in attendance and made presentations where so noted later in these minutes.

At 8:32 a.m., Chairman Holmes called the meeting to order.

Update on Proposed Regional Landfill Fatal Flaws Study

David Townsend, III, Public Works Director, introduced Rachel Kirkman, Senior Geologist from Golder Associates. Ms. Kirkman, who, at the Board’s regular February meeting, presented the results of the Fatal Flaws Study on the proposed regional landfill project. Ms. Kirkman provided some additional information to the Board and reiterated that while no major flaws were found, there are a few challenges that will have to be dealt with. She said that additional investigation is warranted for: wetlands/streams/100-year floodplains, cultural resources/threatened or endangered species and vertical separation from bedrock and groundwater.

Charlie Hiner, PE, Associate and Senior Consultant for Golder Associates, spoke about the conceptual design of the proposed landfill, and said that there were some topographical challenges. He also spoke about the abundant rock at the landfill, but said that there is a possibility of mining the rock on the property and using it in the construction of the landfill.

Ms. Kirkman spoke again, reminding the Commissioners that the Board, at their February 7 meeting, approved the second phase of the proposed project, which will include 1) a market study to evaluate market conditions to determine the economic feasibility of such an operation and 2) a financial evaluation to determine the costs of permitting, construction, operation, and closure/post-closure costs of the facility.

Golder representatives discussed other issues with the Commissioners, including the possibility of selling methane gas to power companies, which might help subsidize the cost of moving existing power transmission lines.

Bid Award for Audio/Visual Equipment for Historic Courthouse Meeting Room

Paxton Arthurs, County Building Inspections Supervisor, asked the Board to award a bid for an audio/visual system for the Historic Courthouse Meeting Room. He said that request for proposals were issued pursuant to NCGS 143-129.8 in January. The proposal was based on a design by the firm AVI-SPL.

The following proposals were received that met the RFP requirements:

Vendor Information:	Audio & Light (Greensboro, NC)	Church Interiors (High Point, NC)	Technical Innovation (Morrisville, NC)
Total Bid	\$34,103.92	\$36,250.00	\$41,957.00

Each proposal includes all hardware, software and installation required for a fully functioning audio-visual system. Mr. Arthurs said that after evaluating the ratings on each proposal, it was determined that the most cost effective, responsive bidder was the low bid vendor, Audio & Light, Inc.

On motion of Frye, seconded by Kemp, the Board voted unanimously to award the bid for an audio-visual system for the Historic Courthouse Meeting Room to Audio & Light for a cost of \$34,103.92 and authorized the County Manager to negotiate and sign a contract with the vendor.

Update on Emergency Services Projects

Donovan Davis, Emergency Services Director, provided the following updates:

Multi-Jurisdictional Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJMHMP) Update

The 2009 MJMHMP has finally been approved by the State and Federal agencies. The plan will be presented to the Commissioners in April. Following a public comment period, the Board may consider adoption of the plan. Municipalities will also be required to hold public hearings and to adopt their portion of the plan, as well.

VIPER Radio Project Update

The VIPER radio project is on track and the equipment for the 9-1-1 Center has been ordered. Two offices have been lost in order to house the new equipment. There is still no confirmation on the Assistance for Firefighter Grant applied for by the fire departments. The new tower at the Franklinville Fire Department is near completion and expected to be online during the first quarter. Construction has started on the new tower at the NC DOT campsite.

Research is being conducted on options for pricing portable and mobile radios. Leasing, as well as purchasing, is being considered. Currently, the lease option appears more favorable because the first payment will not be due until the second year, and the radios would be paid off at the end of six years. This would also include a maintenance program and a promotional discount. All radios are on State contract.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Billing – Outsourcing RFP

In an attempt to research alternative solutions to increase EMS collection revenues, an RFP was issued, and 14 proposals were received in December from firms across the country; however, only two met our requirements. The remaining two proposals are currently being reviewed to determine if either will benefit and improve our collection processes, insurance claims, consumer outreach and availability, and overall revenue.

EMS & 9-1-1 Staffing/Call-Volume Increase

The EMS and 9-1-1 Communications service areas have reached a critical level where call-volume has risen so greatly that it is affecting operations and response. In the EMS area, call-volume has increased by 2,891 responses since 2006. Transports have increased over 1,000. In 2010, EMS responded to 17,079 calls and transported over 9,360 patients with only six and one-half ambulances. The Trinity ambulance is only a 12-hour ambulance, on duty during peak hours: 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. In a recent audit, the NC Office of EMS, which licenses and regulates our service, recommends adding two additional 24-hour paramedic units and making efforts toward moving our employees to 12-hour shifts. It is also common for the Liberty ambulance to

respond to calls in Asheboro, Archdale, Coleridge, Farmer, or Seagrove, causing very long response times.

In addition to the quandary of increased call-volume, the number of complaints from citizens and outside field responders has increased noticeably over the past 24 months in the following categories: response time to call, employee attitude or behavior (especially after 10:00 p.m.), and employee mistakes, most of which are an indirect result of our increased demand for service.

Mr. Davis provided statistics on ambulance availability and unavailability during the past six months. He also said that when the number of ambulances decreases or when there are no ambulances available, Randolph relies on surrounding counties to assist via standing by at the county lines or, when necessary, responding to calls inside Randolph County. We provide the same coverage to our surrounding counties when asked. Mr. Davis also provided statistics on the number of call responses during the last calendar year.

Mr. Davis asked for consideration to add additional EMS staff to handle the overwhelming demand for ambulance services. No positions have been added to the EMS service area since the Trinity 12-hour ambulance was established with four positions in late 2005.

Mr. Davis said that the 9-1-1 Center has also had a remarkable increase of an additional 3,371 calls to 9-1-1 in 2010. During that time, telecommunicators answered 105,966 calls on 9-1-1 and dispatched 73,929 calls to law enforcement, fire, EMS and rescue. The total number of telephone transactions (incoming and outgoing) was 305,266 calls. The number of radio log entries and radio transactions exceeds one million. Total increase in 2010 was 4,902. This does not include the number of transactions in which telecommunicators are tasked by law enforcement to conduct DMV transactions or when entering or searching for missing or wanted persons, vehicles or articles. One position was added to this service area in late 2005.

The NC Department of Insurance (DOI) recommends seven telecommunicators per shift. This would require an increase of nine (9) new telecommunicator positions. The DOI rating for the 9-1-1 Center has a direct affect on ratings for the fire departments, which in turn, has an effect on Randolph County homeowners' insurance premiums.

Complaints in the 9-1-1 service area have also increased over the past 24 months. The majority of complaints are related to telecommunicators not answering field units on the radio because they are either busy on the telephone and didn't hear them (which affects responder safety), or, they are from citizens and/or field responders regarding information gathered or not gathered on a 9-1-1 call. Considering the call-volume, the only way to eliminate these types of complaints is to add positions and separate the call-taking and dispatch functions, or to eliminate non-emergency services to citizens and field agencies alike.

Facility Issues

The 9-1-1 building has served its purpose successfully for nearly 20 years; however, it is evident on a daily basis that the spacing needs of this facility are very limited and the infrastructure struggles to keep up with demand. In regards to preparations of installing the VIPER radio equipment and needing to expand the number of consoles in the 9-1-1 Center, estimated costs are in excess of \$200,000 that will be required to retrofit the existing space, including upgrading and expanding electrical components and infrastructure.

The 9-1-1 Center currently has six fully operational console positions. During peak hours, all positions are filled by a telecommunicator, although call-volume exceeds the capacity of six positions. For future growth, four additional console positions are needed. This can be done in the existing space, but it will be tight, and the Center will be land-locked, leaving no room for future expansions. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC), located in the basement, also serves as our training room and can hold only 12 people comfortably and efficiently during an emergency activation. It can hold only 15-17 people comfortably for training or meetings. This room needs to be doubled in size because EOC activation may require at least 20 people. Trainings usually have 30 or more people who need to spread out to practice their skills. In addition, three more office spaces are needed as well as a conference area to hold small meetings when the EOC is occupied.

The current 9-1-1 building has approximately 7,400 sq feet. The Asheboro EMS base, located at the Ira McDowell Center, has approximately 1,200 sq feet. The base, now more than 20 years old, is in need of major repair, renovations and expansion. More space is needed for additional bedrooms, an additional office, and new spaces for medical supply storage with regulated heating and air, laundry and linen storage, and a covering to protect spare ambulances.

Alternative solutions have been researched regarding both of these facility issues by exploring the options of building a consolidated 10,000 sq. ft. building on property already owned by the County on New Century Drive. It is estimated that a new consolidated 911 & EMS facility can be constructed for just under \$2 million. If the decision is made to construct a new consolidated facility, the old 9-1-1 Center would remain as a redundant back-up center, which is now required by the N.C. 9-1-1 Board standards for funding. The old EMS base would continue to be used for storage of over 30 years worth of medical records, training supplies, and to house some spare ambulances in the vacated bays. Mr. Davis asked the Board to consider these issues in their upcoming budget deliberations.

Preview of Tax Revaluation Process

Debra Hill, Tax Supervisor, provided statistical analyses and current sales information concerning the County's upcoming revaluation, which is scheduled for 2013, and discussed how the current real estate market may affect the revaluation. Ms. Hill stressed that state law requires a revaluation at least every 8 years. Currently, Randolph County is on a six-year cycle.

Update on Economic Development Program

Bonnie Renfro, Economic Development Corporation President, updated the Board on economic development issues in the County and provided some historical statistics on project activity and real estate inquiries. Ms. Renfro referred to the County's Economic Development Reserve Fund plan, which began in 2005. Three of the four years have been funded, and all funds have been fully encumbered for incentives and product development. She mentioned that the Malt-O-Meal incentives would come out of the Economic Development Reserve Fund, which was not originally intended. Ms. Renfro asked the Commissioners for their consideration of the following:

- 1) Should we continue the Economic Development Reserve Fund program?
- 2) Should we continue park development?
- 3) Should we look at alternatives based on post-recession marketplace?

Discussion of Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Budget Meeting Schedule

Cheryl Ivey, Clerk to the Board, and Will Massie, Assistant County Manager/Finance Officer, presented a proposed FY 2011-12 budget meeting schedule for the Board’s consideration. After discussion, the Board asked that this item be placed on the March regular meeting agenda for consideration.

Open Discussion

The Board discussed a request by Guil-Rand Fire Department for the existing Guil-Rand rural fire protection tax district to be converted to a county service district in order to allow for an increase in the fire tax levy in this district. Guil-Rand, when it was established, capped its own tax rate at 10 cents. Guil-Rand says that additional revenue is needed to maintain the current level of service in the district. The Board decided to hear a formal request by the fire department on March 14 after which a public comment period will be held.

Adjournment

On motion of Frye, seconded by Kemp, the Board adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

J. Harold Holmes

Darrell L. Frye

Phil Kemp

Stan Haywood

Arnold Lanier

Cheryl A. Ivey, Clerk to the Board